Commentary

Volume Fifty-seven, Number Six, June 1974

HOLY LAND
Hillel Halkin

MEMORIES OF "PARTISAN REVIEW"
William Barrett

THE FEAR OF AFFLUENCE
John P. Sisk

DÉTENTE
THEODORE DRAPER

MANDELSTAM'S WITNESS
Robert Alter

THEATER CHRONICLE
Jack Richardson

Books in Review
R. J. Herrnstein
David Vital
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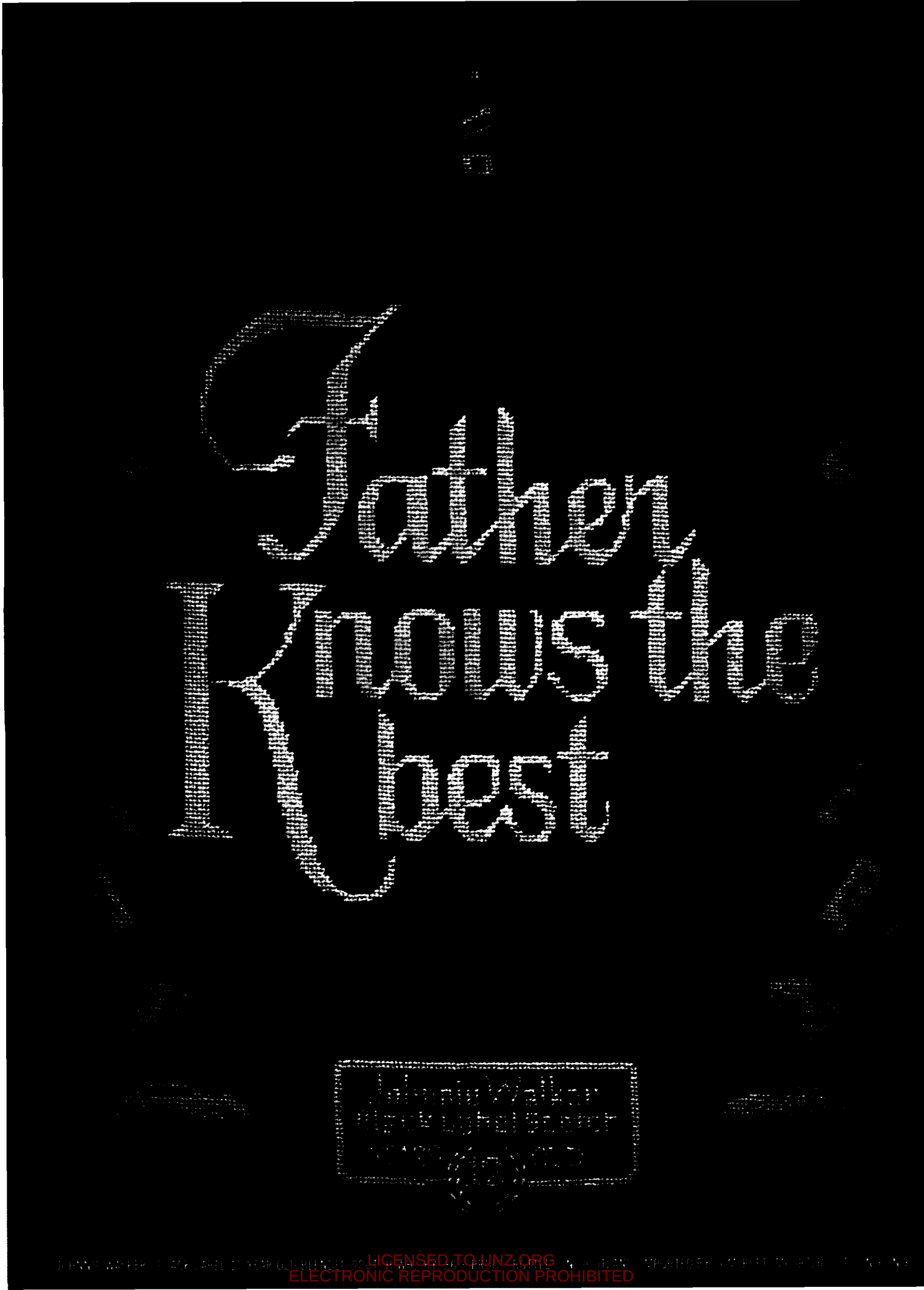

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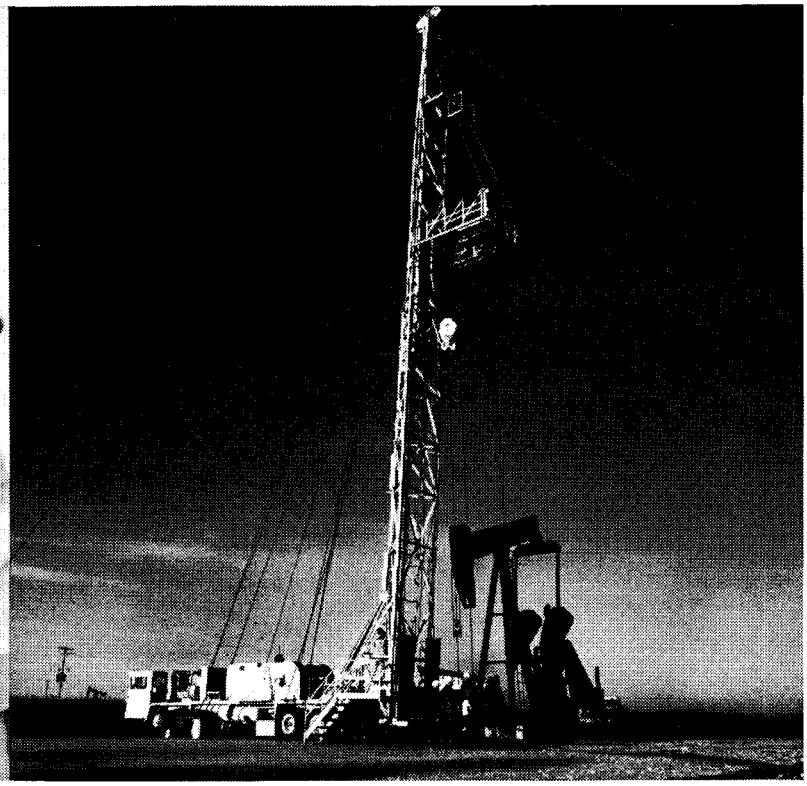

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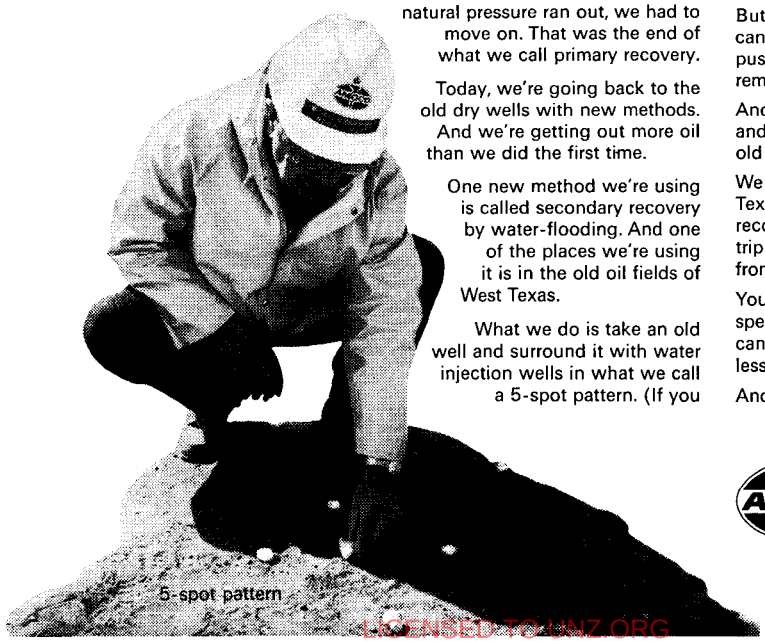

5-spot pattern

AMOCO

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Eugenics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

With his usual brilliance and lucidity, Charles Frankel voices in "The Specter of Eugenics" [March] the misgivings felt by many about the uses to which discoveries in the field of biology, particularly genetics, can be put in our imperfect world. Biology and genetics have achieved spectacular successes during the last half-century, especially in the last decade or two. Unprecedented powers to influence individual humans, and mankind as a whole, are placed, or are soon to be placed, in human hands. Does man have enough wisdom to use these powers wisely? Will the possession of these powers be a blessing or a curse? It seems that a polarization of opinion concerning these questions is taking place among scientists and intellectuals generally. What may be called a "no-holds-barred" and a "hands-off" school of thought are crystallizing. To the former, the genetic endowment of mankind is in jeopardy. Genetic corruption leads to mental and physical degeneration, and may lead to the extinction of the human species. The clear and present danger warrants application of heroic remedies: if these remedies are accepted freely, so much to the good; if not, compulsion may be necessary. By contrast, the "hands-off" school believes that the dangers are exaggerated or even imaginary. Tinkering with human "nature" is not only foolhardy but sacrilegious. Human reproduction and family building are private affairs, and the right to privacy is in this matter too basic to be abrogated or infringed upon.

To reconcile the above antithetical schools of thought is beyond my abilities. It is, however, worthwhile to point out that the problems at issue have several aspects that should be distinguished. Before all else, euphenics and eugenics must not be confused. The former proposes to control the manifestation of the genes carried by individual persons; the latter aims to alter the genetic endowments of populations and eventually of mankind as a whole. In the broadest sense, euphenics includes everything from swallowing aspirin tablets to heart transplants. An increasing number of hereditary diseases can be "cured," e.g., phenylketonuria by special diets. Of course, what is "cured" are the manifestations and not the genetic causes of the diseases. Some euphenic measures, such as organ transplants and abortion, raise issues of ethics that are yet to be resolved. I place abortion under the rubric of euphenics, because it is something that is done to the body of a prospective mother who wishes to be freed from that prospect. A fetus is potentially a person, but the potentiality is realized only very gradually. To say that the destruction of a fetus in early pregnancy stages is murder is about as unreasonable as calling any birth-control measures murders. After all, the Pill and IUD also destroy sex cells that potentially could give rise to persons. Be that as it may, euphenics is concerned with individuals; it is a branch of medicine that can be guided by medical ethics.

Eugenics does not aim to "cure" individuals with genetic defects, but rather to minimize the chances of their being born. Negative eugenics would reduce the frequencies in populations of genes responsible for genetic defects, and thus reduce the incidence of persons with these defects. Positive eugenics would attempt to enhance the incidence in populations of healthy, desirable, or elite genetic endowments. Negative and positive eugenics are in a sense the two sides of the same coin, because lowering the frequencies of undesirable genes enhances the frequencies of desirable ones, and vice versa. Actually negative and positive eugenics are very different in scope. A near-unanimity may possibly be reached on what genetically conditioned traits mankind would be better off without. It is hard to conceive of such unanimity on what an ideal man should be like. Some genetic defects bring utter misery to afflicted individuals as well as to their families. A method whereby some of the aims of negative eugenics may be achieved is genetic counseling. Basically, it consists in providing information to the individuals concerned about the risks involved. The actions that follow from the counsels may be recom-

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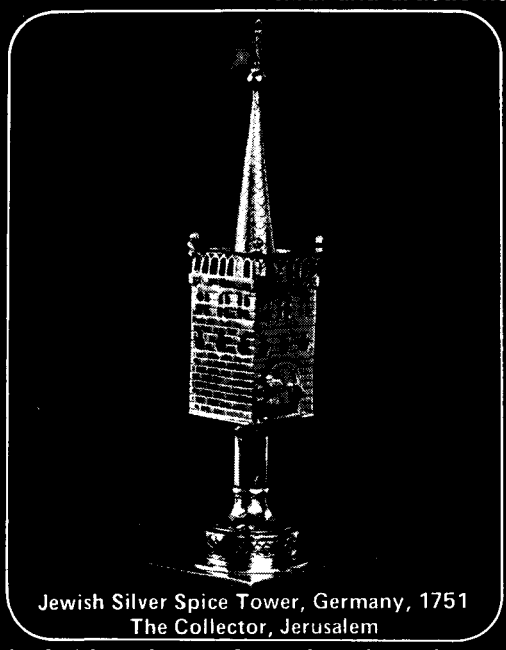
Jewish Art

How Wrong Even Berenson Can Be!

Bernard Berenson once wrote: "The Jews have displayed little talent for the visual, and almost none for the figurative arts." Berenson's is an oft-repeated opinion that Jews and art are antithetical, and those who supported it looked for reinforcement in the Second Commandment: "You shall make no sculptured image or likeness for yourself." Ergo, "Jewish Art" is a contradiction in terms.

Or is it? The recently published Encyclopaedia Judaica devotes 72 pages to this "non-subject", with no fewer than 197 illustrations, and photographs of hundreds of antique Jewish objets d'art illustrate the entire work. Ancient synagogues recently unearthed in Israel provide archaeological evidence of a magnificent Jewish artistic heritage hardly suspected by historians and art experts.



Jewish Silver Spice Tower, Germany, 1751
The Collector, Jerusalem

Over the ages, the synagogue, the Jewish festivals and the Jewish home have inspired artisans and craftsmen to create a wealth of beautiful objects, from imposing baroque Torah ornaments, kiddush goblets, gothic ballustrated and filigreed spice towers to stately hanging Sabbath lamps and candelabra, Hanukkah lamps and other ritual ceremonial art objects used in the celebration of the Sabbath and festivals, lovingly fashioned out of gold, silver, pewter and other materials to reflect the artistic styles of the thousands of communities in which Jews have lived.

Illuminated parchment marriage contracts (Ketubot), Esther Scrolls (Megillot) and Mizrach Tablets, as well as decorated Passover Haggadahs and Hebrew books and manuscripts are additional objets d'art with which the Jew surrounded himself. Genre paintings, sculpture, prints and engravings on Jewish and Biblical themes decorated Jewish homes in Vilna and Vienna, Fez and Florence, and rich tapestries and hangings of silk and brocade adorned synagogues the world over. It appears that Berenson and his supporters overlooked something!

The vicissitudes of Jewish history have taken their toll of these art objects, and antique Judaica has become one of the rarest art forms in the world! For many years, only museums competed for the very few surviving examples of authentic Jewish Art. Lately, however, serious collectors and discriminating Jews, proud of their cultural and artistic heritage, have begun seeking works of antique Jewish Art for their homes and offices, not only as unique decoration but as reflections of their own personal tastes and background. For Jewish Art is Jewish sociology and anthropology, and archaeology – and religion. In short, Jewish Art is a mirror on Jewish history, a graphic glimpse of Jewish civilization.

Collecting Jewish Art is not an inexpensive hobby – far from it. But good art has proved itself a virtually inflation-proof investment. Fine Judaica has rapidly increased in value in recent years, and the growing rarity of quality Jewish Art, matched by an increasing demand, can only accentuate the trend towards higher values.

The Collector, located, appropriately enough, in Jerusalem, is an art gallery specializing in rare Judaica and antique Jewish Art. We are experts, and we work closely with collectors and museums in assembling quality collections of antique Jewish Art. Because of the extreme rarity of authentic Judaica and the close personal attention required in building first-class collections, The Collector can represent only a limited number of serious collectors and museums.

If you have ever admired or wished to acquire a beautiful object of Judaica, or are interested in exploring the possibility of seriously collecting antique Jewish Art, I would like to meet with you. Would you call or write me to set up an appointment? Thank you.

Cordially,

Michael Kaniel

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mended but not compelled. Ethical problems arise in connection even with this "mildest" form of negative eugenics. Moreover, some would argue that counseling alone is not enough to counter the disgenic trends of human evolution. Others, on the contrary, find fault in counseling because it is often connected with such procedures as amniocentesis and abortion, which are alleged to be a "slippery slope" at the bottom of which they imagine horrors like infanticide, euthanasia, etc. Perhaps one should remember that venturing on some slippery slopes is inevitable in human life, but one can take precautions not to slide to the bottom.

Positive eugenics is by far more ambitious an undertaking. Some zealots wish to "redesign man" or make a "new man." Others would be content making the best of the existing genetic endowments common or universal. The late H. J. Muller exclaimed, "The biological distance from apes to man is a relatively slight one, yet how potent!" We could arrange things so that mankind of the future will be as much above the present one as the latter is above the apes. Does not so grand a perspective justify heroic measures, even if they go against the present-day mores? Mores will change as the appreciation of eugenics becomes widespread. "Prenatal adoption" is the first chapter of Muller's program: women will bear children conceived by artificial insemination with the sperm of eminent and/or eugenically approved men; there will be "sperm banks" for storage of the semen in deep-frozen condition; later, "ova banks" and *in vitro* insemination by the sperm withdrawn from the sperm banks may be developed. Somewhat more remote are cloning and genetic engineering, manufacturing synthetic genes superior to those existing now. Problems of ethics and values that arise in connection with "Brave New World" projects of the above sort are more troublesome than those connected with euphenics or negative eugenics. Who is to decide what sort of men and women positive eugenics should aim to produce? Will the decisions be reached by committees of eminent scientists, of politicians, or perhaps by popular vote? Will the ideal man envisaged by our contemporaries remain the ideal in the 25th and 125th centuries? Cultural changes are, at least in principle, relatively inducible and as rapidly reversible. Genetic changes demand much longer time, and they may prove to be irreversible, unless the science of the future will be more nearly omnipotent than most of us dare to imagine.

Euphenics in the widest sense is practiced now, and will be increasingly ubiquitous in the future. Negative eugenics is making its first hesitant steps, chiefly by way of genetic counseling; it will probably develop superior new techniques and gain the confidence of the general public. Whether one likes it or not, some negative eugenic measures may become necessary to counter genetic deterioration. Positive eugenics of "Brave New World" varieties may or may not emerge from the realm of science quasi-fiction. What is important at present is that research on basic genetics and on biomedical technologies be enabled to proceed and develop. Of course, some of this research, especially that on human subjects, must be made with due precautions and consideration of its social repercussions and of the rights of the persons involved. Some voices have been heard insisting that this research is intruding on matters so sacrosanct or so dangerous that it should be interdicted. It is hard to imaging a more short-sighted and obscurantist attitude.

THEODOSIUS DOBZHANSKY
University of California
Davis, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

At first, I admit, I was somewhat miffed to see Charles Frankel limit his treatment of my recent book, *Genetic Fix,* to a quibble with a blurb by Betty Friedan, on the book's jacket. I was even more concerned when Mr. Frankel associated the activist ideas of radical feminists (Betty—radical?), and those of Marcuse, with those of social scientists who wanted to push, pull, or pulverize Vietnam into the modern world. Mr. Frankel should know from his years of service in the State Department that these social scientists are a quite different breed.

But then I relaxed because it soon became apparent that Mr. Frankel's whole article is by and large a fair, albeit somewhat pedestrian, summary of my book. Like him, I opened with a review of the major new developments in biomedicine; like him, I stressed

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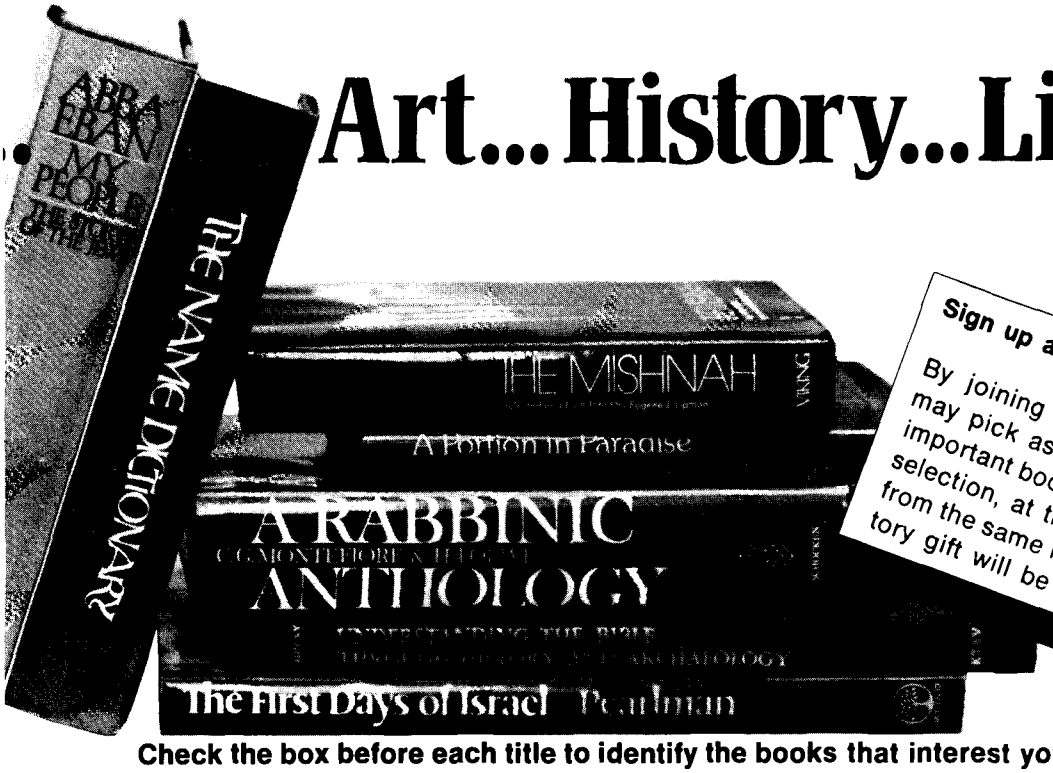

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that not "all the miracles that have been announced at hand are really about to materialize"; in a similar vein, *Genetic Fix* did find it useful to explore the moral issues raised by those developments which are upon us—and to distinguish between negative eugenics (the use of these tools to combat genetically caused diseases) and positive eugenics (their use to promote "desirable" traits, Nazi-style or otherwise). Finally, like Mr. Frankel, I argued against hyperactivism, trigger-happy interventionism, but also against a holistic anti-scientism which rejects all these developments. Parents and all citizens, it seems to me, ought to inform themselves in greater detail about these matters so that they will be better able to reap the benefits (e.g., in 1974 about 14,000 Mongoloid children will be born in the U.S.; about half need not) and avoid the dangers (e.g., abortion turns out to be riskier than heretofore reported).

There is no doubt in my mind that my Columbia colleague reached his conclusions all on his own; I am equally sure that if he had gotten beyond the jacket of *Genetic Fix*, he would have acknowledged the similarity in approach.

AMITAI ETZIONI
Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Charles Frankel seems moved by that archetypal nostalgia for simpler, *ergo* better, times, when certain events—notably, the events of human procreative life—were apparently left to chance. Mr. Frankel also shows us convincingly how humans have transgressed whenever they have tried to implement dreams of a "new man," and how the best of our modern scientists often produce rhetoric that smacks of brave new worlds. . . . Against the menacing specter of "eugenics" (Hitler has rendered the term forever disreputable and pejorative, we need another), Mr. Frankel holds up an image of fallible, fallen man. And with modern history as his chief witness, he opts for innocence and randomness, infinitely preferable to any human scheme.

It is a tempting thesis. Procreative and genetic choices, unlike more detached social and political choices, are incredibly difficult to make. For one thing, we *live* with and through our genetic choices, and are literally the products of the choices of our ancestors—whether deliberate or chancy. Objectivity is impossible in this realm: we move into the "amoral" demilitarized zone of science and find it booby-trapped by subjective concerns. Can we make decisions about abortion without consciously or subconsciously identifying the unborn with our children, or ourselves? Can we coolly label the tragedy of a profoundly afflicted child an "inborn error of metabolism" and be comforted when every impulse makes us wish to invest such an event with significance larger than scientific categories? Is it not in the very recognition of our limits that we are most human? How then can we presume to intervene in other lives?

Yes, it is tempting to avoid certain arguments that demand that we try to articulate the inchoate, examine our most intimate acts and responses, perhaps pass judgment on our secret selves. "Is nothing sacred?" we ask in outrage as the machine once again invades the garden; like Mr. Frankel, we resist under the banner of spontaneity and individuality. But perhaps we ought to hesitate before we accept this welcome reprieve from choice and responsibility, present and future. . . .

Man is, as Mr. Frankel notes, prone to speculate on distant possibilities; but his "new man" theory may be a straw man in this argument. Man is a creature uniquely capable of imaginative leaps through time, both past and future: this attribute has produced poets and prophets as well as tyrants and fanatics. Man is also uniquely capable of imaginative prediction, dramatization, confrontation with, and even subtle alteration of his probable future. In this sense, our best possibilities are undermined by Mr. Frankel's ultimate reprieve. Those who speculate today in the area of biomedicine seek, not a new man, but new alternatives in response to new knowledge.

Rather than decry or debunk such efforts, it would seem that more non-scientists and non-physicians should turn their creative energies—and, I happen to think they they are considerable, if not omnipotent—to the ongoing debate in bioethics. While "genetic engineering" is yet in a primitive state where man is concerned, our ethical and moral positions are also fragmentary, spectral, and ill-

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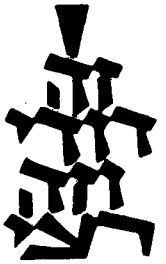

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defined. Paradoxically, we are faced with that rare situation, a congruence between our technological capability and our values. The result, in this case, is an uneasy paralysis, eliciting Mr. Frankel's rightful complaint. We have not reached the haziest agreement about what it means to be "human," and about which of our "rights" are inalienable, valuable, vital to the human condition. The fact that we have no logic for solving the problems which are raised by human genetics suggests the need to explore them further, rather than to retreat from them. When we confront our hidden agendas, we can more confidently speak of a fine freedom.

What gives some cause for optimism is that today there are compassionate adults of high intelligence and considerable education who are willing to wrestle with these terribly difficult problems. If some of the participants in the debate, such as Daniel Callahan and Amitai Etzioni, sound "familiar," they remind us more of Aldous Huxley and J. B. S. Haldane than of Frankenstein and Faust. They challenge our apathy and our resistance to new and disturbing knowledge; they seek to create a climate in which freedom and choice are possible rather than illusory.

Thus, the contemporary dialogue of biomedical ethics does not seem to be a lurid publicity stunt, as Mr. Frankel suggests. Because of the "stream of reflection" many laymen are becoming more aware of the issues already at hand, some of which Mr. Frankel mentions in his article, as well as the more *outré* genetic prophecies. Some may choose to remain on the periphery of the discussion, wringing their hands, calling down old gods to exorcise futurist nightmares, or evoking the days before the snake appeared. If they choose the latter pose, they may respond positively to Mr. Frankel's statement that "the deliberate broad-scale regulation of man's procreative life requires powers of intelligence, imagination, and emotional perspective not within the human range." Is this humility in the face of facts? Is it a curious form of optimism? Or is it evidence of a profound unwillingness to deal with problems which are already demanding response, and receiving partial answers? One does not have to march in the ranks of historical revolutionaries, carry the torch of moral absolutism, or crave Faustian powers to believe that the human cause in this case will not be served by easy protestations of impotence, or appeals to our insatiable appetite for yesterday's innocence

EILEEN T. BENDER
New Haven, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENNTARY:

I cannot agree with Charles Frankel when he identifies abortion as a biomedical technique. I doubt that most mothers who have abortions are doing so with the idea of improving the race or of reducing the incidence of defective genes in the genetic pool. I also doubt that that is what Father Drinan or Rabbi Jakobovits had in mind when they made the statements quoted by Mr. Frankel. Perhaps, however, Father Drinan and Rabbi Jakobovits would agree that abortion perfectly expresses the most abhorrent facet of genetic planning as it is presented to the public: the denial or destruction of human life as a basis for improving the race.

It is paradoxical that so many of the proponents of abortion, euthanasia, and compulsory sterilization consider themselves liberals. Yet the true liberal idea has always been a belief in the possibility of human progress based on the freedom of all human beings to make choices. Permissive abortion is based on the freedom of the mother to choose, not whether she will be a mother (since she already is if the question of abortion arises), but whether she will allow her child to live. But what of the child? If Mr. Frankel's mother had chosen to destroy him he would not be free to choose any method of eugenic planning—or none. . . .

Mr. Frankel's statement that "the partisans of large-scale eugenics planning, the Nazis aside, have usually been people of notable humanitarian sentiments" is charitable but I have difficulty feeling that those who base humanitarian schemes on the willful and deliberate destruction of groups of people other than themselves are interested in anything other than their own self-actualization, which can hardly be called humanitarian in relation to those killed. . . .

To say that it is necessary to destroy some human life in order to improve some human life is to say that all progress stops here. Such an attitude is just as reac-

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tionary as to say that the study of biomedicine or space technology should be banned. The quest for knowledge is inherent in man. But only if we keep faith with the tenets by which we live will this quest for knowledge lead to progress rather than to the destruction of mankind.

SARAH M. DIETZ
Taftsville, Vermont

CHARLES FRANKEL writes:

Sarah M. Dietz chides me for departing from ancient verities, and Eileen T. Bender takes me to task for yearning for simpler days. Once again I learn the perils of taking a moderate position. I think I understand some of Miss Dietz's concerns. It is better to consider abortion, I think, in the homely terms of family, children, wife, personal resources, rather than in the grandiose terms of genetic engineering. But I could share Miss Dietz's entire point of view only if I could shut my mind to the monstrous suffering which prohibitions of abortion have caused.

I am less than sure that I fully follow Miss Bender, but I think I sense where her central discontent lies. It is with my emphasis on contingency, individuality, and unpredictability, which she thinks I am using as a license to evade choice and responsibility. Now it is true that I believe that unpredictability is uneliminable from human life, and it is also true that I value this aspect of the human scene and enjoy waking up in a world in which, up to a point, I don't know exactly what's going to happen during the day. I think it desirable, indeed, to make special moral and legal room for individuality and diversity, and regard such provision as indispensable to any society that is free and equitable. But Miss Bender misunderstands the implications of this position if she supposes that it means opposition to intelligence, foresight, choice, or planning. As with death, whose time and character are unpredictable, one can still make prudent provision and take out an insurance policy.

Behind Miss Bender's misunderstanding there is perhaps another assumption which, because it is generic and widely shared, deserves some explicit attention. It is the assumption that the more knowledge we have in a given area the more we are justified in undertaking broad-scale collective planning with regard to that area. But this assumption is sometimes valid, sometimes not. Everything depends on the problem faced, on what the knowledge gained actually reveals about its character, and, not least, on the procedures for collective decision-making that are available or realistically imaginable. With regard to the genetic constitution of humanity, I find myself distrustful of collective planning.

Does this show a loss of faith in intelligence, an opting-out, a wringing of hands in the face of complexity? It is difficult to see how. It is an attempt to use intelligence to appraise the character of present knowledge and the soundness of prevailing moral tendencies, and to reach some notion about social policy on this basis. Rightly or wrongly, my own conclusions are that the proper social policy where procreation is concerned is, within fairly broad limits, to leave the matter to free individual choice. The leap from "faith in intelligence" to faith in the collective masterplanning of God-knows-what is characteristic of the contemporary mind *dite* "progressive." It has had calamitous consequences, from which, in my opinion, it would be intelligent to learn.

Amitai Etzioni's letter begins by disagreeing with the central point in my essay, then says that I really only have written a summary of his book, and then says that I probably haven't read his book. His letter is its own commentary on itself. The one point worthy of discussion is what I think is a profound intellectual disagreement between us. It is whether radical feminists and Herbert Marcuse belong to "a quite different breed" from the social scientists who rationalized the Vietnam war with talk about modernization, etc. Mr. Etzioni, leaning hard on my previous condition of servitude, thinks that I "should know" that the two groups are quite different. He thinks it so obvious that he doesn't bother to explain why. But I can only confess that I don't know what I "should know."

From where I sit it seems to me that there are in the world—and particularly in what is known as the world of letters and learning—a rather large number of people who think that by a proper application of "knowledge," or by an act of righteous will, the attitudes, tropisms, fears, and desires formed by biology, culture, and human experience can be changed—and changed into what we want, and without an unreasonable cost. The "knowledge" in question is often simply the fashionable opinion of a half-decade, and sometimes not even opinion but a farrago of pretentious metaphysics, history-by-pronunciamento, and moral ponderosities. As for the righteous will, it usually consists in little more than the incapacity to imagine the reality of those who are different. No matter. Some of these people, armed in their knowledge and sense of right, have been prepared to celebrate Stalin, or announce Mao, or expose constitutional government as a hypocrisy, or call for dismantling "the system"; others have talked about sexual differentiation as though it were the result of a conspiracy; others have called for grand genetic designs; and others have proclaimed the American misadventure in Vietnam as noble. To be sure, the last group sprinkled its sacramental abstractions over an obviously bloody affair. But have not other intellectuals, similarly illuminated to suppose that neither nature nor human nature has its limits, also endorsed bloody affairs? And have they not smiled fondly on movements and events which have done great harm, and which have been saved from bloody consequences only by their essential frivolity?

When, on the cover of a book I read a blurb announcing it as an act of existential courage, a beacon pointing the way to a new political path, and a call to take personal responsibility for the human future, and when the book is about genetics and eugenics, I fear I have a natural tendency to think the words rather grandiose and to identify them as part of the stream of thought which says that the human race can accomplish anything it wants if it only has the knowledge and will. I think, for my part, that the human creature is, to a very considerable extent, the product of forces external to him, most of which he does not understand. Through intelligence he can master some of these, but he remains an animal barely five feet high in a universe that outruns his imagination. His achievements, given his provenance and stature, are extraordinary, but he becomes comic or a monster when he forgets that it is nature, not he, that usually calls the tune.

Mr. Etzioni calls this disagreement —merely a disagreement about the place of man in nature—a "quibble." Well, everyone to his own

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sense of what is a big issue. In my essay I distinguished between Mrs. Friedan's approach and his, but I now see that I may have overstated the difference.

Theodosius Dobzhansky's letter, it seems to me, expresses an attitude toward nature and man generally similar to my own, which I find fortifying. More important, it carries the discussion forward beyond anything I said. In stimulating his letter, my article has already justified its existence.

Israel After the War

To the Editor of Commentary:

I should like to comment on David Vital's article, "The Need for Political Change" [March].

The Zionist movement has made three fatal mistakes, the consequences of which are objectively and comprehensively described in Mr. Vital's article.

Mistake number one: It has failed to issue a manifesto validating the claim of the Jewish people, in its dispersed condition, to Palestine as the land in which its own still-functioning civilization arose and had developed, and had thus become the mother of two great civilizations, the Christian and the Moslem.

Mistake number two: It no sooner came into possession of Palestine than it should have formulated a new constitution for world Jewry as an international people, with its hub in Zion, with its spokes in the form of religion, ethics, and culture, and with its rim the entire Jewish people.

Mistake number three: The new Jewish Palestine should have been accorded the same political freedom from its need of being prepared for war as that accorded to Switzerland. Such freedom would have atoned for the unspeakable torments which the Christian and Moslem nations have inflicted on the Jewish people throughout the centuries, to say nothing of the Holocaust.

There is still time to undo these three mistakes. It is desperately urgent that a reconstitutional convention representing world Jewry be called for the purpose of dealing with the political problems discussed in Mr. Vital's article. . . .

Mordecai M. Kaplan
Jerusalem, Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

David Vital's call for some participation by non-Israeli Jews in the reevaluation of the nature and scope of the Zionist vision is very much in order. But no "imaginative departures," to use his phrase, can be expected from the established national organizations in the Diaspora.

Trained for a generation to leave basic decisions to the Israelis and to concern themselves with propaganda and fund-raising, they have become the victims of their own one-sided efforts. Our organizations have become so "deideologized" as to be capable of only one function—"to magnify and to sanctify," not the name of God or even His people, but that of the state of Israel. There is far less independent thinking, much less criticism, regarding Israeli governmental policies here than in Israel itself. Perhaps the new realities in the aftermath of the October war will encourage an "agonizing reappraisal" of Herzlian Zionism by individual Jewish thinkers, but such an examination is not likely to be contemplated, much less undertaken, by the organized Jewish establishment.

Mr. Vital correctly points to the crucial problem—the belief that the "inhabitants of Israel hold it, in some sense, in trust for all other Jews." It is the determination of the scope and limits of this "trust" that our official leadership has so zealously striven to evade. . . . By way of illustration, let us ask ourselves whether the Israelis hold our "trust" in respect of Israel's *greatness* or its *bigness*. While all of us are custodians of one another's good name, the state affords a testing ground of our heritage, for good or ill, demolishing some stereotypes, but also generating others by virtue of the inevitable contradiction between the ethereal vision and its earthly incarnation. As our representative on the stage of international rivalry, Israel holds in "trust," not only so much land, but also a good deal of our self-image. Hence, our immense stake in Israel's moral stature and our responsibility to aid in its growth. But are we equally involved in the dream of biblical irredentism and in the translation of the earthly Jerusalem to the heights of heaven? I submit that a positive answer could only be based either on a catastrophic view of the Jewish Diaspora and a consequent need of ever-expanding "living space," or on a naive interpretation of the present era as "messianic" in character, ushering in "the end of days," or on both. . . .

(Rabbi) Jacob B. Agus
Baltimore, Maryland

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . David Vital may not be aware that in America Zionist leadership within Jewry is *not* supreme. The largest contributors to Israel and those most welcome to the governing officials in Jerusalem are non-Zionists, and thus their role in American-Jewish affairs cannot be used as a model for the changes which Mr. Vital advocates.

We have no democratic elections within the Jewish community in the United States and our leadership has been in office as long, or longer, than many of the long-time Israeli leaders. What we have developed in the U.S. is a substructure within the Jewish community, composed of those who are usually called the "young leadership." These younger people perform without intruding upon the older leadership. The young leadership of the United Jewish Appeal, for example, encompasses those between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-nine, and their existence makes it possible for the old leadership to go on in its usual way, without having to face any challenge to its power. . . .

What Mr. Vital may not understand is that the Jewish community outside Israel is as rigid as the leadership in Israel; the two leaderships get along very well and regard any intrusion of new ideas as a form of disobedience. . . . I make these comments to encourage Mr. Vital in his quest for change in Israel and also to suggest that much the same is needed in this part of the Diaspora.

Judah J. Shapiro
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . David Vital is right in pointing out the sensitive issues involved in a possible interference in Israel's political processes by American Jews. Nevertheless, the dangers to Israel's future, inherent in the continuation of the current system and the myopic leadership that it perpetuates, are so great that friends of Israel would be delinquent if they were to shrink from forcefully impressing upon the Israeli leadership that a change is long overdue. The present political system is responsible for a vast array of internal and external problems. . . . Internally there are

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serious social problems, a bloated and insensitive bureaucracy, and a lack of confidence in the leadership. Externally there is isolation and a dangerous dependence on a single country—the United States. . . .

Although reality is too complex to be cured by a single operation, were one to focus on a step that would have a profound impact on the political system in Israel, it would be the introduction of direct representation in the Knesset. Such a method has its pitfalls, but under present circumstances it is bound to unstick dramatically the fossilized and bureaucratized ruling elite which is choking the country. . . .

One looks in vain for any such concrete proposals in Hanoch Bartov's article, "Back to Abnormal" [March]. Instead, it is full of semi-mythical pronouncements about the Jewish condition. This approach is a form of self-flagellation and an escape from analysis which is popular among the substantial segment of Israeli writers who have their roots in the labor movement, especially the Left flank. (Very similar opinions were expressed recently by Amos Oz on the CBS-TV program, *60 Minutes*.) The message of these writers in essence is that the Israelis had no right to feel "normal" and to imagine that they might thus escape the "Jewish condition." . . . The danger in this attitude, however, . . . is that it leads to yet one more rationalization for the lack of initiative and imaginativeness which has characterized Israel's policy-makers. What was wrong, according to this view, was that the Israelis, including "even seasoned veterans of the labor movement," thought that time was on Israel's side. The Israelis, it is also claimed, have lost "all that sense of what it still means to be Jewish in a hostile world." Add to this Amos Oz's statement that the "superpowers will never allow a decisive Israeli victory" and you end up with the conclusion that there is not much that poor little Israel can do. . . .

ELIEZER B. AYAL
University of Illinois
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Back to Abnormal" Hanoch Bartov mentions that the number of Syrian and Egyptian tanks deployed against Israel during the October war was twice that used by Montgomery in the battle of El Alamein. He claims that the Syrians had 2,700 tanks and the Egyptians had 2,600. Peter Young's book, *A Short History of World War II, 1939-1945*, states that Montgomery had 1,351 tanks which, if correct, means that the Egyptian and Syrian tank force outnumbered Montgomery's by a four to one ratio. This underscores Mr. Bartov's point that the Israeli military recovery was "nothing short of stupefying." Indeed, had the war lasted three more days, Israel might have achieved a victory comparable to that of 1967. Hopefully, when Israeli public opinion is more fully aware of what actually happened last October, much of its current mood of pessimism, bewilderment, and scapegoating will dissipate.

EDWARD S. SHAPIRO
Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey

DAVID VITAL writes:

I agree with Mordecai M. Kaplan that we have made tremendous errors (although, for my part, I would hesitate to use the term "fatal") and I would certainly welcome the convening of a great assembly of world Jewry to deal with the political and ideological problems that the present crisis has laid bare. But I am less sure about the particular errors he identifies. For example, when he says that "the new Jewish Palestine should have been accorded the same political freedom from its need of being prepared for war as that accorded to Switzerland," my response is, I am afraid, to point out that Switzerland's neutrality rests in part on its being permanently "prepared for war" and that, in any case, the Russians, the Arabs, and the Americans would have had to agree to our being neutral and free. This, they neither did nor do. In a word, I am very far from thinking that the present Jewish predicament (of which the predicament of Israel is a component part) can be traced in its entirety to the errors of our leaders in Israel and elsewhere. What I do think is that they have failed to make the most of a poor hand of cards and have thrown some of the marginally useful ones away for inappropriate and, on occasion, improper reasons.

My reaction to Eliezer B. Ayal's

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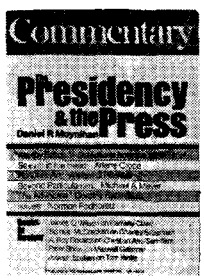

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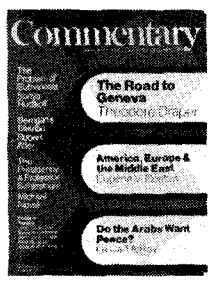

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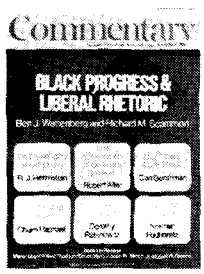

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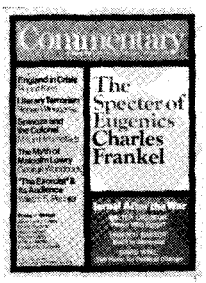

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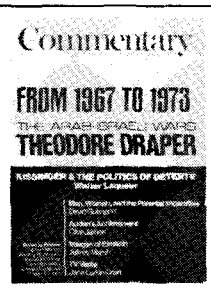

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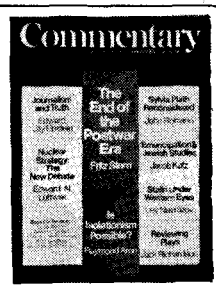

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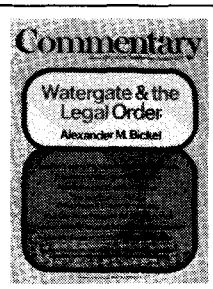

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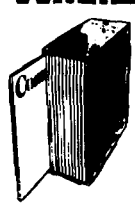

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letter is much the same. Clearly we agree on most points. The differences between us, such as they are, lie in the weight we would give to particular factors. It seems to me that de Maistre's old dictum about every nation getting the government it deserves has a validity that must never be lost sight of. Of course, the leaders have proved myopic; and of course the "system" is faulty. But as soon as we ask *why* and *how*, we see that we will get nowhere until the historical and sociological roots of our condition are looked at very carefully indeed. So while I too favor electoral reform, for example, I would warn against excessive reliance being placed upon it.

As for the point which both Judah J. Shapiro and Jacob B. Agus make about the Jewish national organizations in the Diaspora and, particularly, in the United States—well, I *am* aware of what it is that troubles them, and troubles me too, for that matter. I did not avoid the subject out of misplaced delicacy. I believe that Israelis have as much right to look hard at American Jewish institutions as American Jews to look hard at those of Israel. But the first shots in what I would like to hope is the beginning of a much more productive and, if I may say so, intimate relationship must be fired on the home ground in each case. That said, I would make one central point. It would be wrong, both on historical grounds and on those of principle, to lay too much responsibility at the doors of Israel, its people, its leaders, and its institutions. Ultimately, the responsibility for a great deal of what has happened is a responsibility that must be shared. The major part of Jewry, the part with the most numerous and significant collective and private options, is elsewhere. One would like to hope that it will do better in the present crisis of the Jewish people than it did a generation ago or a generation before that. So far, I see no signs of a move toward renewal. There are *some* faint signs of change in this country. So in this respect matters on your side of the water hardly appear better than they do over here.

HANOCH BARTOV writes:

I honestly do not see the connection between my article and Eliezer B. Ayal's letter, and I cannot help but feel that Mr. Ayal has used my article as a vehicle for airing his own views on various aspects

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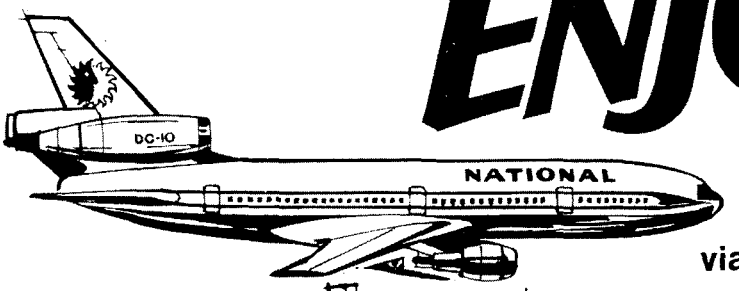

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of Israel's political system. I suspect that Mr. Ayal is an Israeli, and I assume that he is familiar with the Israeli press. He must be aware, then, that both in my regular column in *Maariv* and in other ways I have participated in the present national debate on the issues he mentions. If he reads *Maariv,* for example, he surely knows that I was for Dayan's resignation, that I felt that the last elections should have been preceded by changes both within the ruling Labor alignment and in the electoral system, etc., etc. And inasmuch as these issues were relevant to the theme of my article, I did refer to them; after all, I was critical of Israel throughout for having lost its sense of reality in the last few years.

But my article was about the trauma of the October war, about what to me is central in Israel's position in a world filled with Arab hate and European *Realpolitik* and Russian imperialism. On this new situation, which I defined as a sobering "back to abnormal," I have no concrete proposal to make. For none of the concrete proposals Mr. Ayal suggests would have prevented the supreme effort by the Arabs on Yom Kippur to destroy Israel, or have prevented the murder of women and children at Kiryat Shmona. I am afraid that Mr. Ayal is the one who is closing his eyes to the tragic realities of our existence, and by refusing to face this new Jewish condition, he becomes a party to the kind of semi-mythical pronouncements which cost us so much blood scarcely a generation ago.

Spinoza's Jewishness

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I must take exception to Milton Himmelfarb's view that Spinoza was an ex-Jew ["Spinoza and the Colonel," March]. The fact that the great philosopher of Amsterdam became a "citizen of the world" did not in the least diminish his Jewishness; nor did the ban pronounced against him by the leaders of the Amsterdam congregation which forced him to live outside the ghetto mean that he was not a Jew. Spinoza was as Jewish as Maimonides, Don Isaac Abravanel, Moses Mendelssohn, and Martin Buber, and he never forswore or renounced his Jewish faith.

Mr. Himmelfarb falls victim to a fallacy common to Jewish scholars of the 19th and early 20th centuries which, strangely enough, was never shared by their non-Jewish colleagues. George Santayana, for example, speaks of the "genuine Hebraism" of Spinoza. . . .

The confusion about Spinoza's attitude toward Judaism stems from a widespread misconception about its genuineness. Following the lead of the German-Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz, rabbis, scholars, and historians shunned and despised the Kabbalah, the significance of which has been rediscovered only in the last two decades, mainly through the studies of Gershom Scholem. Now, Spinoza's concept of God is based primarily on kabbalistic ideas. . . . Ironically enough, the close relationship between Spinoza and the Kabbalah was recognized very early. Leibnitz mentioned it in his *Theodicy* as early as 1708, thirty-one years after Spinoza's death. . . . As is widely recognized by now, the pantheistic suggestions of the first and third book of the Zohar were of the highest significance for Spinoza. . . . The most striking resemblance, if not complete identity, between the theories of the *Ethics* and the doctrines of the Kabbalah occur in the area of body-mind relations. Even the mysterious concept of Spinoza's, *amor Dei intellectualis,* stems from the second book of the Zohar. Moreover, Spinoza shares the idea of the intellectual union with God with Maimonides, who anticipated the philosopher of Amsterdam in proclaiming the intellect the highest good.

It follows, then, that Spinoza was never an ex-Jew but rather the most Jewish of philosophers. He proclaimed what we have learned today to consider the genuine character of Judaism. . . .

HENRY WALTER BRANN
Tacoma Park, Maryland

MILTON HIMMELFARB writes:

In Spinoza's time Judaism was not yet a multifarious, subjective thing, or things. There was no liberal Judaism, no secular Jewishness, no being a Jew culturally or sentimentally or metaphorically. Nowadays most Jews think of Judaism as the civilization of the Jewish people, and of the Torah as a cultural creation of the people. What Spinoza knew to be the undisputed Jewish doctrine was, in Saadya Gaon's formulation, that we are a people only by virtue of the Torah. That is to say, the Torah created the Jews, and not the Jews the Torah. Of course it was also the undisputed Jewish doctrine that the Torah was divine, not human.

In Jewish law and in the eyes of the Jewish community a Jew who denied this did not cease to be a Jew, he was only a bad or sinful Jew. In his own eyes the Jew who denied this had necessarily ceased to be a Jew. Spinoza treated the Bible as a human document (and is therefore the founder of modern Bible criticism). Nowhere does Spinoza say what liberal or secular Jews were to say after him, that the old Jewish self-definition was wrong, and in any event we must learn to live with new ones. He could have said this if he had wanted to. Excommunicated, he need no longer fear excommunication.

In recent years the late David Ben-Gurion was only the most prominent of many calling for the rehabilitation of Spinoza the Jew. A generation earlier German Jews had called for it. Hermann Cohen, philosopher, liberal Jew, and adherent of Bible criticism, said no. He denied that Spinoza was a good Jew.

Kabbalah is mystical interpretation of the Torah. There can be no mystical interpretation of human documents: the Declaration of Independence, or the Code Napoléon, or Byron's poetry, or the collected addresses of Felix Adler. However far kabbalistic readings may go in the direction of heterodoxy, they always take it for granted that the Torah is a divine document. For Spinoza the Torah was not only human, but also human of a rather inferior sort. Even granted, *arguendo,* that he was influenced by Kabbalah, that does not make him a Jew. There were Christian kabbalists—Pico della Mirandola, for one.

With Santayana, was "genuine Hebraism" an unambiguous compliment? He did not mean to compliment Morris Raphael Cohen when he called him an Oriental philosopher. A prudent man will hesitate to bet that a reference to the Jew Karl Marx or to the Judaism or Jewish emotion of Karl Marx is friendly.

The great philosopher Spinoza was an ex-Jew of singular courage and probity. Why should we ask for more? Why must we also have it that he was as Jewish as Maimonides or, as if that were not enough, the most Jewish of philosophers?

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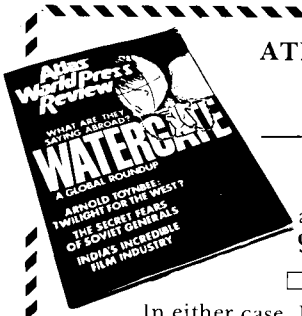
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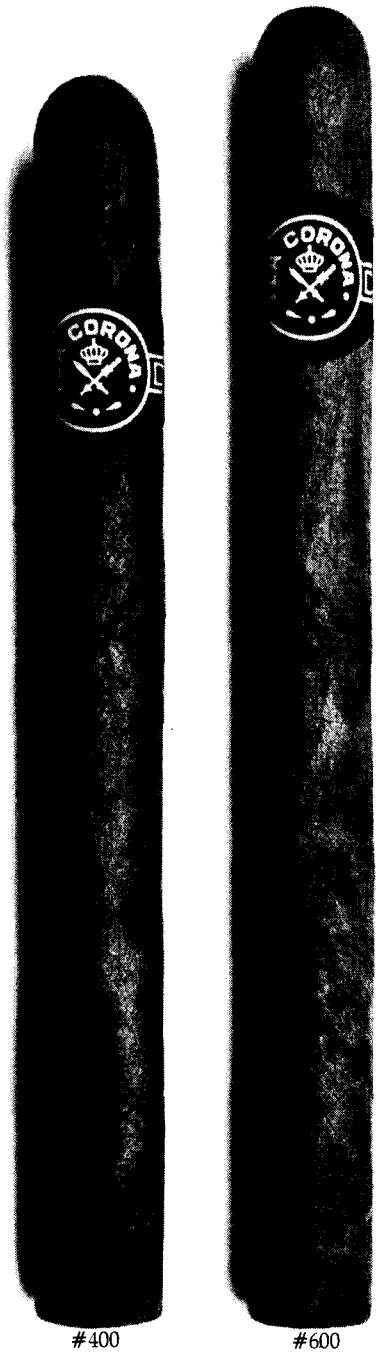

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Détente

Theodore Draper

Not since World War II has there been such an era of ill feeling between Western Europe and the United States as there has been in the past year. No sooner had the then Presidential Assistant Henry A. Kissinger issued his call in April 1973 for a new Atlantic Charter to reinvigorate "shared ideals and common purposes with our friends" than it appeared that our friends had begun to change places with our enemies. Six months later, in October, Dr. Kissinger, now Secretary of State, was overheard saying, no doubt in pique, that he didn't care what happened to NATO because he was so disgusted with it. Two months after that, in December, he privately described the behavior of the Europeans during the Arab-Israeli conflict as "craven," "contemptible," "pernicious," and "jackal-like." In March of this year, he unguardedly expressed his disgruntlement by publicly complaining that getting our friends to realize our "common interests" was a bigger problem than "regulating competition" with our enemies.[1]* Others have observed this extraordinary topsy-turvydom of friends and enemies. According to so experienced and respected a student of international affairs as George F. Kennan, the United States "now has relations with the Soviet Union fully as cordial as those with most of the European NATO members"—which is another way of saying that we are no more cordial with the latter than with the former.[2]

This is a peculiarly disturbing state of affairs for a country whose leaders, including Dr. Kissinger, have never tired of protesting that NATO, the Atlantic alliance, or Western Europe, is the very "cornerstone" of U.S. foreign policy. A profound change has obviously taken place, going far beyond the problems and provocations that have presented themselves in the past year. If it continues much longer, the 1970's are unlikely to produce the "structure for peace" pursued by President Nixon; they are more likely to resemble the 1930's in the breakdown of a fragile international order.

"Concepts" and "conceptual" have long been among Dr. Kissinger's favorite terms. Almost ten years ago, he drew up an indictment of U.S. policy which, in part, sounds strangely familiar today: "In recent years this promise [of a partnership between a united Europe and the United States] has been flawed by increasingly sharp disputes among the allies. The absence of agreement on major policies is striking. On the Continent, the fear of a bilateral United States-Soviet arrangement is pervasive." And what was the basic trouble? It was, he wrote, the existence of an open challenge "not just to the technical implementation of American plans but to the validity of American conceptions." In June 1968, after a long silence, Dr. Kissinger finally pronounced on what had gone wrong in Vietnam. He traced many of our difficulties in Vietnam to "conceptual failures" and decided that "almost all of our concepts, the military ones as well as some of the traditional ones, have really failed." A few months later, he flatly asserted that "the basic problem [in Vietnam] has been conceptual." More recently, in connection with his visit to Moscow in March 1974, Dr. Kissinger let it be known that he was looking for a "conceptual breakthrough."[3]

It is all the more surprising, then, that concepts may well be the most vulnerable aspect of Dr. Kissinger's tenure as Presidential Assistant and Secretary of State. He has lived such a charmed life since he went to Washington in 1969 that far more attention has been paid to his personal tactics than to his conceptual strategy, although he used to warn against the danger of "being mired by the prudent, the tactical, or the expedient" and was wont to inveigh against the lamentable disposition of American leaders to act, during periods of détente, "as if a settlement could be reached by good personal relations with their Communist counterparts."[4] Indeed, one of the most intriguing aspects of the Kissinger phenomenon is the curious difference between Professor Kissinger and Presidential Assistant-Secretary of State Kissinger.

THEODORE DRAPER is the author of many works on international affairs, including *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, *Abuse of Power*, and *Israel and World Politics*. Mr. Draper's most recent articles in COMMENTARY include "From 1967 to 1973: The Arab-Israeli Wars" (December 1973) and "The Road to Geneva" (February).

* Notes are to be found at the conclusion of this article, on p. 45.

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II

PROFESSOR Kissinger had devoted himself almost wholly to Europe and to European-American relations. In book after book and article after article he had taught that the fate of the United States was bound to be decided in or with Europe. In this view he had not differed from official American policy, at least until the Johnson administration, which had departed from it in deeds if not in words. Yet Presidential Assistant Kissinger went to work for a President who, not long before taking office, had downgraded Europe as secondary in future American policy. This position had been taken by Mr. Nixon in a well-known article in *Foreign Affairs* of October 1967, which has been so distorted in the retelling that one suspects more people have referred to it than have actually read it. The article has been recalled mainly for its alleged foreshadowing of President Nixon's later China policy because in it he had urged that "our long-range aim is to pull China back into the family of nations" and "into the world community" on condition that it give up the role of being "the epicenter of world revolution." These phrases were subsequently taken to mean that Mr. Nixon had served notice of his intention to establish friendly relations with the People's Republic of China. But there was both more and less to it than that.

The leading Nixonian concept at that time had to do with a question of fundamental importance: What area of the world would be most dangerous to the United States in the final third of the 20th century? Mr. Nixon's answer in this very article was: "Asia, not Europe or Latin America." He saw the United States as "the greatest Pacific power," propelled westward, as "partners," to be sure, not as "conquerors." Asia was where "the greatest explosive potential is lodged." The rhythm of history, as he put it, had dictated that "the focus of both crisis and change is shifting" from Europe to Asia. Europe having been rebuilt and the Soviets "contained," he urged that we should reserve our main energies for Asia "to reach out westward to the East, and to fashion the sinews of a Pacific community."

It was in this context that Mr. Nixon discussed what to do about China. There was no indication in this article that he thought of using China as a counterweight against Soviet Russia. Rather, he saw China as the "clear, present, and repeatedly and insistently expressed" threat in Asia. In order to meet that threat more effectively, he advocated coming "urgently to grips with the reality of China" by pulling China "back into the family of nations" and into "the world community." At this stage in his rethinking of U.S. foreign policy, Mr. Nixon seemed oblivious to the contradiction inherent in his desire to concentrate American energies in Asia, which could only threaten or disturb China, and his inclination to make some sort of friendly overture to China, which could come to fruition only if America showed signs of leaving Asia alone. Nixon's formula was still so vague that it did not attract much notice at the time. When Dr. Kissinger later said that it "really foreshadowed the Peking initiative"[5] he was hardly justified by anything in the 1967 article itself, since it contained little more than the germ of the idea of establishing some sort of new relationship with Communist China.

Mr. Nixon has had it both ways on the Vietnam war. During the period of the main U.S. build-up in 1965-67, he protected President Johnson's Republican flank and, if anything, out-Johnsoned Johnson in his pro-war fervor. Mr. Nixon would have had U.S. troops in Vietnam as early as 1954 when the French were facing defeat at Dien Bien Phu. On the eve of the massive U.S. intervention in 1965, he went all out for President Johnson's policy. He was one of those who thought the war was being fought primarily between the United States and Communist China. An extreme exponent of the "domino theory," he foresaw Chinese Communist aggression as far as Australia in four or five years if South Vietnam fell. No one in the Johnson administration was more convinced than Mr. Nixon that the only way to end the war was "by winning it in South Vietnam." Nevertheless, by the end of 1967, in his *Foreign Affairs* article, Mr. Nixon drew back somewhat from his previous bellicosity. He now recognized that "the role of the United States as world policeman is likely to be limited in the future," that there was no more "room for heavy-handed American pressures," and that "the central pattern of the future in U.S.-Asian relations must be American support for Asian initiatives." Asia had by far the highest priority in his scheme of things. After he was elected, President Nixon repeated and repeated and repeated that he was not the one who had sent more than 500,000 American boys to fight in Vietnam. That was true; it also was true that he was the one who had done everything a Republican leader could do to make it possible for a Democratic President to send them.[6]

IT IS more difficult to know what Professor Kissinger thought about Asia and the Vietnam war. His 1965 book, *The Troubled Partnership,* was devoted to the European-American relationship, but in connection with it he made some interesting references to Southeast Asia. He was mainly concerned with getting across the thought—which figured prominently in his "new Atlantic Charter" speech eight years later—that our European allies had "ceased to think of themselves as world powers." For this reason, he warned that the United States could not expect "meaningful support for such United States policies as the defense of Southeast Asia."

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At the same time, however, he ventured the opinion that "over the next decades the United States is likely to find itself increasingly engaged in the Far East, in Southeast Asia, and in Latin America," in none of which our European allies were likely to see any vital interest of their own.[7] The book was written before President Johnson decided on large-scale U.S. intervention in Vietnam, but judging from Dr. Kissinger's expectation the decision could not have come as a surprise. In 1965-66, Dr. Kissinger made two trips to South Vietnam at the invitation of Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge—who later recommended him as Presidential Assistant to President Nixon. In 1967, he acted as the American go-between in conjunction with two Frenchmen in an abortive "peace feeler." Nevertheless, he published nothing about the war during these three years. His biographer, a close friend for many years, tries to explain this puzzling silence on the ground that Dr. Kissinger "had nothing to say" because he "did not know enough about the issues."[8] Since he knew more and was privy to more than all but a relatively few in the highest official circles, there would have been little protest against the war if his modesty or reticence had been more contagious.

In the spring and summer of 1968, Dr. Kissinger finally found his voice on the entire range of American foreign-policy questions, including the Vietnam war—the voice of former Governor Nelson Rockefeller, who was running for President and who, we are assured, spoke what Dr. Kissinger wrote.[9] Fortunately, however, we do not have to depend wholly on such indirect evidence. In June of that year at a conference in Chicago sponsored by the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs, Dr. Kissinger spoke for the first time in his own name on the Vietnam war and its lessons. His main contribution, as previously noted, was the concept of our "conceptual failures." Ironically, in view of the later insistence on his alleged infatuation with "balance of power," he then lamented that the epidemic of rebellions in the world, "cannot be encompassed at all by traditional theories of balances of power." His comments did little more than to communicate his disenchantment with the war, with U.S. policy, and even with "the American philosophy of international relations."[10]

By chance, Dr. Kissinger's last published article dealt with "The Vietnam Negotiations." Written before President Nixon asked him to serve, it appeared in January 1969, just as he was going into the White House. His criticism of U.S. policy was again "conceptual," though it clearly showed that he had a great deal of inside knowledge about what had gone on militarily and politically in Vietnam. For an inveterate conceptualizer, however, he seemed to give inordinate importance to what he called the "choreography" of negotiations—the way they were carried on. A fascination with tactics, maneuvers, and symbols appeared to preoccupy him as much as grand concepts and large historical movements. After pages on the proper tactics to pursue vis-à-vis North Vietnam, he bethought himself to caution: "The overconcern with tactics suppresses a feeling for nuance and for intangibles." This advice seemed to make the statesman or diplomat a conjurer of the ineffable and the impalpable. One would have expected that an overconcern with tactics would suppress a sense of essence and substance. Concepts and nuances, the philosopher and the fixer, were already struggling for the mind and soul of Henry Kissinger.

THE Vietnam war produced another more tangible and immediate conflict. On the one hand, Dr. Kissinger had clearly come to the reluctant conclusion that the war was a bad job and needed to be ended as soon as possible. On the other hand, he held on to the conviction that it had to be ended "honorably" at all costs.[11] The key concept here was "honorable"—although he never made clear how a dishonorable war could be ended honorably. The closest he came to condemning or repudiating the war was a comment that it was open to "the charge of bad judgment." He hastened to add that such a "charge" could not be removed by "a demonstration of incompetence" in ending the war. Another concept mobilized in favor of ending the war "honorably" or not at all—for it came down to this in the end—was a variant of the "domino theory." What was now at stake in Vietnam, Dr. Kissinger argued, was "confidence in American promises," on which the stability of much of the world—the Middle East, Europe, Latin America, even Japan—allegedly depended. He apparently could not envisage anything worse than "unilateral withdrawal," though the settlement which he eventually arrived at was admittedly a bilateral withdrawal only on paper. We have heard ever since that the North Vietnamese have never withdrawn. Judging by President Nixon's own criteria—"honor, a peace fair to all, and a peace that will last," and "with no misunderstandings which could lead to a breakdown of the settlement and a resumption of the war"[12]—this "peace" has already failed the test, at least so far as the Vietnamese themselves are concerned. Long before the end of the Asia-first century once envisaged by Mr. Nixon, it is safe to say, it won't make a particle of difference how the United States got out of Vietnam; all that will matter is that the United States was forced to pull out and that the war between the Vietnamese went on.

There was also at this stage a curious historical disparity in the thinking of Mr. Nixon and Dr. Kissinger. The former went into office with the concept that American destiny would for the rest of the century move westward to Asia; his view of the Vietnam war and relations with China was

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governed by this grand, if highly dubious, proposition. Dr. Kissinger did not go anywhere as far afield in his outlook; he seemed to worry most about the more immediate consequences, mainly outside Asia, of how the Vietnam war would come to an end. Though their reasons were somewhat different, both were prepared to fight as long to end the war without victory as President Johnson had been prepared to fight for victory. Yet they were luckier than he was. Enough people seemed to think that the war had gone on for so long that it might never end; anyone who could bring it to a close at all, no matter how long it took and at what frightful cost, was entitled to eternal gratitude.

What concerns us here is not so much the Vietnam settlement as the decision which led to four more years of war until the settlement was reached. That decision was made by President Nixon, with Dr. Kissinger's concurrence, early in 1969, in the first weeks of the administration, and it may well be the most critical one that they made. Once they decided on a course which put American interests all over the world at the mercy of such an intangible nuance as "honor" in Vietnam, their freedom of action and even their field of vision were hopelessly restricted elsewhere. That this is exactly what happened as a result of the Vietnam war is not open to question. We have it on the authority of President Nixon himself: "Now, in terms of our world situation, the tendency is, and this has been the case for the last five to six years, for us to obscure our vision almost totally of the world because of Vietnam."[13] In January 1973, he remarked that "it just happens as we complete the long and difficult war in Vietnam, we must now turn to the problems of Europe."[14] The price of the Vietnam war was paid not only in Vietnam; it was paid all over the world. It is with the other price that we must now reckon.

III

ANOTHER major related decision was made at the outset of the Nixon administration.

Apart from the Vietnam war, the great question before U.S. policy was whether the problem of our friends was more important and deserved priority over the problem of our foes. Was it better or safer to let Western Europe go its own way and further weaken its ties with the United States, or to concentrate on working out a détente with Soviet Russia and a rapprochement with the People's Republic of China? The decision went in favor of the latter course. Western Europe was put on the waiting list, after China, Russia, and Vietnam. 1971 was the year of China; 1972 was the year of Russia; the Vietnamese agreement came at the end of 1972; and Europe was scheduled for 1973. The stage was thus carefully prepared for a crisis in European-American relations.

This order of priorities was based on several considerations: China and Russia could do far more than Europe to help end the Vietnam war. Russia was North Vietnam's main supplier, and China was supposed to be the chief inspiration of North Vietnam's hardliners. If outside pressure was to be brought on North Vietnam, it clearly had to be brought through them. Thus the Vietnam war was itself partially responsible for the choice of priorities.

Other factors undoubtedly entered into the calculation. By 1969, it was apparent that the Russians were heading for nuclear parity with the United States. For some reason, U.S. officialdom has been prone to underestimate Soviet military intentions and capabilities. It was surprised by the rapidity with which the Soviets achieved the A-bomb, the H-bomb, advanced jet engines, long-range turbo-prop bombers, airborne intercept radars, and large-scale fissile material production.[15] In the mid-1960's, the Americans did not expect the Soviets to be willing to pay the exorbitant price necessary to achieve numerical equality in missiles. In 1966, the United States decided to build no more nuclear weapons and to limit itself to improvement of existing weapons.[16] By late 1964 or early 1965 at the latest, however, the Soviets set out not only to equal but to surpass the United States, at least numerically, in intercontinental missiles.[17] The publicly announced Soviet military budget rose from 12.8 billion rubles in 1965 to 13.4 in 1966, to 14.5 in 1967, 16.7 in 1968, 17.7 in 1969, and 17.9 in 1970—an increase of 40 per cent. The real resources devoted to the Soviet military, including secret and hidden allocations, amounted of course to much more.[18] The point here is not whether the world has changed for better or worse because the Soviet Union decided to catch up with the United States in nuclear power. The Soviet decision and achievement faced the incoming Nixon administration with the unpleasant choice of accepting Soviet-American strategic parity or of engaging in another, probably futile arms race. From a strictly military point of view, Europe was out of this contest, and the Soviet Union preempted the fullest attention.

If China and Russia were the pressure-points on North Vietnam, China was obviously the pressure-point on Russia. By 1969, it was commonly believed that the Russians were more worried about the Chinese menace than about the American threat. Despite the protestations of President Nixon and his officials that nothing was further from their minds than the idea of trying to play off China against Russia, no one else could be prevented from seeing a Chinese-American rapprochement in this light. Again, Europe as well as Japan was out of the contest; they watched from afar, with pleasure, consternation, or indifference, the Soviet-American strategic-arms-limitation talks and the Chinese-

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American tête-à-tête as both proceeded in 1971.

In his incredible interview with the Italian journalist, Oriana Fallaci, Dr. Kissinger volunteered the information that, from 1969 on, he had wanted to achieve three things: peace in Vietnam, rapprochement with China, and a new relationship with the Soviet Union.[19] The "troubled partnership" between the United States and Europe was significantly missing from the list.

But there was a consolation prize for Europe. The catchword was "partnership." In one of his first Presidential speeches in April 1969, President Nixon pledged the United States to "deep and genuine consultation with its allies" whom he referred to as "partners."[20] In his report to Congress of February 1970, a key document of administration policy, Mr. Nixon said that the nations of Western Europe and North America made up "our partnership"; he also called for both a "genuine partnership" and "a new and mature partnership." To make the Europeans acutely conscious of what a good deal they were getting from him, Mr. Nixon took to telling them how badly treated they had been by his predecessors. Anyone who wanted to demonstrate that the United States had run NATO and the Atlantic alliance as if they were plantations with a master and slaves had only to cite the President of the United States, who now confessed: "For too long in the past, the United States had led without listening, talked *to* our allies instead of *with* them, and informed them of new departures instead of deciding with them." All this was going to change as the United States moved "from dominance to partnership."[21] A year later, in February 1971, Mr. Nixon announced that the move had successfully been made: "In Western Europe, we have shifted from predominance to partnership with our allies."[22]

By 1971 the main concepts of the Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy seemed to have crystallized—rapprochement with China, détente with Russia, partnership with Western Europe. Perhaps because he would not leave well enough alone or because his adviser on national-security affairs was an inveterate conceptualizer, Mr. Nixon could not resist the temptation to bring forth his own grand conceptual structure. In the summer of 1971, he took a group of news-media executives meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, into his confidence and gave them a glimpse of the world in the next five to fifteen years. He characterized the United States, Western Europe, Soviet Russia, mainland China, and Japan as the "five great economic superpowers." The emphasis was clearly on "great" rather than on "economic." These five, he said, "will determine the economic future and, because economic power will be the key to other kinds of power, the future of the world in other ways in the last third of this century.[23] Six months later, in January 1972, Mr. Nixon elaborated on this theme. He fitted the new era of the big five into the traditional theory of "balance of power," which he extolled as having been the only basis for an extended period of peace in the history of the world. "It is when one nation becomes infinitely more powerful in relation to its potential competitor that the danger of war arises," he explained. "So I believe in a world in which the United States is powerful. I think it will be a safer world and a better world if we have a strong, healthy United States, Europe, Soviet Union, China, Japan, each balancing the other, not playing one against the other, an even balance."[24]

Until he became President, Mr. Nixon had belonged to the school of thought which believed in making the United States incomparably stronger than its enemies. If that policy had been good before, however, the decline of the United States in relative strength was apparently even better. And was it really true that the danger of war arises if one nation becomes *infinitely* more powerful than others? One had imagined that the danger increased as the gap closed. In any event, this Presidential analysis of the world in 1972 seemed to make the "balance of power" official doctrine, with each of the five so strong in relation to the others that they could play independent roles and constitute "an even balance."

Other officials, especially in the State Department, made exegetical discourses on the new dispensation. One of their favorite commentaries concerned the displacement of bipolarity by multipolarity. The President had at least qualified the five superpowers as "economic," though he had implied that all other kinds of power flowed from economic power. This distinction somehow dropped out of the exegeses. One official simply spoke of "multiple power centers" emerging in the final quarter of this century.[25] Another expounded on the "new power centers"—Western Europe, Japan, and China—which "by definition relates to the decline in the bipolar structure of the world."[26] A third went into more detail: "First, we are entering a world in which the bipolar pattern dominant in the last quarter century has given way to multiple centers of power and influence. Power, defined in political and economic as well as in military terms, no longer is the near-exclusive province of ourselves and the Soviets. The dominant relationships in this decade will not be between two centers of influence, but among five. Western Europe, Japan, and China have moved to the front of the world stage."[27]

How much Dr. Kissinger had to do with all this higher theorizing was not at first clear. Some seemed to think that if President Nixon had an idea, let alone an entire theory, it must have come from Dr. Kissinger. The mere mention of balance of power set off an epidemic of amateurish historical analogies between Kissinger and Met-

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ternich, about whose diplomacy he had written his doctoral thesis fifteen years earlier. A minor annoyance connected with the Kissinger phenomenon has been the excruciatingly bad books that it has inspired. One of them claimed to know that he was already plotting a "conceptual blueprint" for U.S. policy in his doctoral thesis.[28] Dr. Kissinger himself was evidently not amused. He saw fit to tell Oriana Fallaci that "There can be nothing in common between me and Metternich" and that it was "childish" to associate the two of them.[29] He did not say who benefited the more from this offer of disengagement.

The licensed experts pounced joyfully on President Nixon's pastiche of ideas about balance of power and the five superpowers. As one heartlessly put it: "Of the so-called major powers, one (Europe) does not yet exist, one (Japan) has not found a role, and one (China) happens to be neither a superpower yet nor a very likely practitioner of the balance of power should it become one."[30] For a while, the foreign-affairs journals were filled with the higher criticism on such urgent matters as the balance of power in the 19th as compared with the 20th century.

By the end of 1972, the theory had been put out of its misery. President Nixon himself distinguished between the Soviet Union, which "is a superpower," and China, which "has the potential in the future."[31] A potential superpower was obviously not yet ready for the role which he had assigned to it. Early in 1973, Dr. Kissinger pleaded innocent. He made known that he had been on his way to China when Mr. Nixon had given birth in Kansas City in 1971 to the five-superpowers-balance-of-power theory and that he had not read the speech or known what was to be in it before it was delivered. He assured his listeners that "what this administration has attempted to do is not so much to play a complicated 19th-century game of balance of power" as to do something else evidently less complicated, which was "to try to eliminate those hostilities that were vestiges of a particular perception at the end of the war."[32] Once the word went out that the line had changed, Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush carefully explained why the original theory could not have been right: "For one thing, the principal participants have different capabilities. Bipolarity still persists in the strategic relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. Europe is still in the process of developing the voice and organization to fully reflect its international economic position. Japan is still exploring the meaning of its phenomenal economic growth in terms of its international role. China's international position primarily reflects her potential, her great size, and her potential military strength."[33]

Such was the short, unhappy life of the most ambitious concept put forward by the Nixon administration. It was far less important as an intellectual exercise than as a sign of the times. The year of the Kansas City speech, 1971, was also the low point in the fortunes of the dollar that brought about the collapse of the international monetary system. The overall U.S. balance-of-payments deficit had reached the astronomical figure of $9.8 billion, the seemingly inviolate U.S. trade surplus had disappeared, and the convertibility of the dollar into gold, a basic principle of the post-World War II monetary order, was abandoned. The same year seemed to be the high point of European economic and financial strength. It was the turn of Europeans to tell the United States to "put its economic house in order." When former Secretary of the Treasury John B. Connally tried to bully the Europeans, he told them it was now their duty to be philanthropic and their task to correct the imbalances that had developed. If they could have done what he wanted them to do, the implication was inescapable that Europe was more than able to hold its own against the United States. The trade and monetary shocks of 1971 undoubtedly contributed to the elevation of Europe and Japan to the august status of "economic superpowers."

It is also fair to add that the idea of putting Europe on more or less the same plane as the United States was not altogether original. The thought was already in the air, particularly in neo-isolationist circles. One such confident pronouncement in 1970 went: "The Europeans are our best friends in the world; they are also our equals."[34] One year later, the "best friends" quarreled fiercely because the Europeans seemed to be more than equal, and three years later, they quarreled even more ferociously because the Europeans realized that they were much less than equal.

Precisely in this period détente became an active issue in policy.

IV

If anyone should have been prepared for the pitfalls of détente, it was Dr. Kissinger. For about a dozen years before he went to Washington to serve President Nixon, he had been a stern and unsparing critic of anything that smacked to him of "illusions" about détente.[35]

In the first book, published in 1957, with which he attracted widespread attention, Professor Kissinger expressed a certain distaste for, or anxiety about, "peaceful coexistence," the term then in vogue. He twice found it necessary to instruct the reader that "peaceful coexistence" meant for Soviet leaders nothing more than "the most effective offensive tactic" and "the best means to subvert the existing structure by means other than all-out war." It was good Leninist doctrine, he patiently explained, that the Soviets, so long as the relationship of forces was not in their favor, should keep "provocation below the level which might produce a final showdown."[36]

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Four years later, in 1961, Professor Kissinger was worried most about the Western tendency to see a Soviet turn from belligerency to détente as evidence of far more than a change of tactics. "But," he cautioned, "one of the principal Communist justifications for a détente can hardly prove very reassuring to the free world; peace is advocated not for its own sake but because the West is said to have grown so weak that it will go to perdition without a last convulsive upheaval." As for the Western attitude, he observed disapprovingly that "all the instincts of a status quo power tempt it to gear its policy to the expectation of a fundamental change of heart of its opponent" and to the imminence of "a basic change in Communist society and aims." Americans, he thought, were especially susceptible to the belief that all problems were soluble and that "there must be some way to achieve peace if only the correct method is utilized." In this work he was especially censorious of President Eisenhower's "ambulatory" personal diplomacy which inspired him to lay down the general rule that "whenever the Communist leaders have pressed for a relaxation of tensions they have tied the success of it to personalities."[37]

After four more years, in 1965, Professor Kissinger had some more pungent things to say about the American tendency to think of détente in terms of personal relations. It was "futile," he repeatedly stressed, to engage in "personal diplomacy" with the Soviets "even at the highest level," for one reason because their leaders were committed to a belief in the predominance of "objective" factors. Whenever Soviet leaders "have had to make a choice between Western goodwill and a territorial or political gain," he maintained, they "have unhesitatingly chosen the latter." If the Soviets seem to make "concessions," they make them "to reality, not to individuals." He noted that there had been five Soviet periods of "relaxation" since 1917, all of which had come to an end for the same reason—"when an opportunity for expanding Communism presented itself."[38]

As late as 1968, the year before he went to Washington, Professor Kissinger was still of much the same mind about past détentes. "During periods of détente," he observed sharply, "each [Western] ally makes its own approach to Eastern Europe or the USSR without attempting to further a coherent Western enterprise." He summed up the entire process in a way that is still instructive: "Each [détente] was hailed in the West as ushering in a new era of reconciliation and as signifying the long-awaited final change in Soviet purposes. Each ended abruptly with a new period of intransigence, which was generally ascribed to a victory of Soviet hardliners rather than to the dynamics of the system. There were undoubtedly many reasons for this. But the tendency of many in the West to be content with changes of Soviet tone and to confuse atmosphere with substance surely did not help matters."[39]

JUDGING from his books and articles for over a decade, Professor Kissinger should have been repelled by a Soviet-American détente that was accompanied by unprecedented tension between Western Europe and the United States. His entire *oeuvre* was distinguished by an acute distrust of détente and a moving belief in the need for Western Europe and the United States to be linked by the closest possible ties, going far beyond even the existing Atlantic alliance. In *The Necessity for Choice* of 1961, he appealed for "structural changes" within the Western alliance to make it a federalized "North Atlantic community" or a "confederation of states." Otherwise, as he ominously foresaw: "Without a truly common position Western rivalries will either paralyze negotiations or enable the Soviet Union to use them to demoralize the West."[40] In *The Troubled Partnership* of 1965, he went further prophetically and summoned the West to form an "Atlantic Commonwealth" of all the peoples bordering the North Atlantic. The ability of the West to move from the nation-state to a larger community would, he avowed, "largely determine whether the West can remain relevant to the rest of the world."[41] If one had read what Professor Kissinger had written before going to Washington, one could not have imagined he would put the years of détente first and the year of Europe last.

In fact, he was not the only one in the Nixon administration who had had premonitions of what was going to happen in the name of détente. In 1969, the then Under Secretary of State Elliot L. Richardson had given this assurance:

> We shall not bargain away our security for vague improvements in the "international atmosphere." Progress in East-West relations can only come out of hard bargaining on real issues. A détente that exists only in "atmosphere" without being related to substantive improvements in the relationship between the powers is worse than no improvement at all. It tempts us to lower our readiness, while providing no really concrete basis for a reduction in tensions.[42]

In 1970, Robert Ellsworth, the U.S. representative to the NATO Council, came even closer to one of the real issues that later arose to bedevil the Soviet-American détente. He recognized that the Soviet's and Warsaw Pact's "hunger for access to the science and technology of the West" was a key element in their diplomacy and in their push for "expansion of trade, economic, scientific and technical relations" between East and West. Others have since come to the same conclusion.[43] Ellsworth went on to explain that the principal difficulty confronting the Soviets was their inability to pay. It was still possible for an American official to be brutally candid about what the proposed deal entailed:

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> They [the Soviets] would be able to pay if they could balance their imports by increasing exports of raw materials, and oil and gas, but they are unable to achieve this balance. Thus, they must ask for credits—credits which would have to be guaranteed, or possibly even subsidized, by governments. *In essence such an agreement is not trade, but aid.* Decisions about extending such aid, as well as decisions about transferring advanced technology from West to East, are not simply economic or technical decisions. They involve the highest political considerations [emphasis added].

Finally, Ellsworth told the tragic story of the Duke of Urbino who had committed a "classic blunder" four hundred years ago:

> He possessed by far the most advanced artillery of the 16th century, which he foolishly loaned to Cesare Borgia for the alleged purpose of a Borgia attack upon Naples. Instead, Borgia promptly turned the artillery upon Urbino as he had planned all along. That was the end of Urbino.[44]

Who would have guessed that so many American capitalists would become 20th-century Dukes of Urbino?

V

These premonitions, forebodings, and reflections on détente were not produced in a vacuum. There had been, as Professor Kissinger noted, several periods of détente between the Soviet Union and the West since the Bolshevik revolution, as well as three main Soviet détentes with individual Western countries since 1965. In fact, the Soviet Union has had a waiting-list for détentes, with the United States third in line.

The first to join the elect was France. Its détente had its roots in Gaullist doctrine and went as far back as the end of World War II.

De Gaulle made his first bid to the Soviet Union as early as December 1944, before the end of the war, when France was barely free of German troops. During his first visit to Moscow, he tried to convert Stalin to a three-stage system of alliances: the first Franco-Soviet, the second Anglo-Soviet and Anglo-French, and the third a catch-all in which for the first time the United States was generously included within the forthcoming United Nations, for which de Gaulle otherwise had little use. Since de Gaulle held on tenaciously to his long-term plans, even if he was flexible in his tactics, this scheme cannot be dismissed lightly. It was, in effect, his ultimate view of how to restore France to the position she had held before both world wars, when alliances with Russia had been the cornerstone of her foreign policy. Indeed, de Gaulle explicitly invoked the Franco-Russian alliances of 1892 and 1935 and told Stalin that he wanted another for the same reasons that had inspired them. De Gaulle's final aim, then, required more than a mere détente; it demanded an actual Franco-Soviet alliance based on a mutual recognition of each other's interests. Even in 1944, de Gaulle tried to tell Stalin how far to go—or rather not to go—in Poland.[45]

Toward the end of his life, de Gaulle looked back at this period and revealed more fully and clearly what he had had in mind. He had intended, he explained, to cooperate and contract alliances with both East and West, and to form with neighboring states a bloc that would become one of the three world powers, capable of acting as "the arbiter between the Soviet and Anglo-Saxon camps."[46] As time passed, de Gaulle and his successors found it more tactful and expedient to put their program negatively—the breaking down of the two "hegemonies" of the Soviet Union and the United States. But there was a positive side to this design—the building up of a third hegemony, that of France in Europe, and through Europe, in the world. De Gaulle's ends, if not his means, were remarkably consistent over the years. In one of his last writings, he still called on France to play "an international role of the first rank" and to take on "world responsibility," not restricting herself merely to Europe. In Europe as well as in the world, he insisted, it was incumbent on France to be free to act by herself.[47]

De Gaulle's first overture to Stalin was, of course, premature. Stalin had no intention of letting de Gaulle get in his way in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland. At the Yalta conference less than two months later, Stalin did not even wish to give France an occupation zone in Germany, and only Churchill's fight for it made him relent. When de Gaulle left office the first time in 1946, his Russian policy was in shambles.

De Gaulle's second effort was more successful. The latest Franco-Soviet détente, according to Maurice Couve de Murville, de Gaulle's Foreign Minister, began to take concrete shape in the spring of 1965 with a visit to Paris by the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. When Couve de Murville returned the visit in the fall of 1965, Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin told him how worried the Soviets were about the United States, already deeply engaged in Vietnam. The United States and Russia were, in Kosygin's view, actually at war, if only because Russia was supplying arms to the other side.[48] Whatever the merits of the Vietnam war may be, the fact remains that Gaullist France chose to inaugurate its détente with a Soviet Russia which considered itself to be, in effect, at war with the United States.

In February 1966, three months later, de Gaulle publicly announced France's intention to leave NATO, a step which had been on the way the year before and was consummated a month later. In June of that year, de Gaulle "consecrated"

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the Franco-Soviet détente with a triumphal visit to Soviet Russia, during which Party Secretary-General Leonid I. Brezhnev for the first time broached the Soviet proposal of a European security conference excluding the United States.[49]

These moves were highly orchestrated. The French military abandonment of NATO was implicitly an integral part—or price of—the Franco-Soviet détente. In fact, France was not strong enough to offer very much more to the Soviet Union in return for Soviet favor. Ostensibly, the Gaullist position was based on opposition to all blocs, East and West. But France could do very little about breaking up the Eastern bloc; she, however, could do much about breaking up the Western bloc. The Franco-Soviet détente was made between very unequal powers; as a result, its terms were most unequal. If it had been arranged on an equal basis, the Soviets should have withdrawn from the Warsaw Pact as France withdrew from NATO. But of course such a Soviet contribution to détente was unthinkable, and no one in his right mind thought of demanding it. At the very moment France was mortally weakening NATO, the Soviets were massively strengthening the Warsaw Pact. De Gaulle could not negotiate from strength; his negotiating card, in fact if not in name, was the weakening of the system to which France had belonged—a service for which the Soviets were willing to pay a modest price.

For de Gaulle, détente was only the hors d'oeuvre; the main course, still to come, was a Franco-Soviet entente reminiscent of the pre-war alliances. De Gaulle's formula was "détente, entente, and cooperation." In the end, he disdained the Atlantic alliance as no more than "the military and political subordination of Western Europe to the United States."[50] Russia was at least partly in his Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals"; the United States was definitely out of it.

This was the Gaullist vision. De Gaulle knew, of course, that the road was bound to be hard and long, necessitating many detours, maneuvers, and ruses. At various times and in different circumstances, Gaullism seemed to be pro- and anti-German, pro- and anti-American, pro- and anti-Russian, pro- and anti-European. It was ready to use almost any means for its own ends, thereby leading others to think that they could use it for their ends. Yet, in the last analysis, there is a Gaullist hard core that comes as a shock to France's European partners and American well-wishers, no matter how much they have been forewarned. The French behavior after October 1973 in the face of the energy crisis would have given them less of a jolt if the Gaullist heritage had been kept in mind and taken more seriously. It is part of that heritage that France should be the rogue elephant of the West, taking advantage of every opportunity to advance its own interests, feeling more immediately threatened by the American embrace than by the Russian hug, savoring situations which force the other European nations to choose between France and the United States.

In a world in which power so often decides the issue, there was no reason why de Gaulle should not have wanted as much power as possible for France. What is more questionable is the admiration that so many non-French Westerners have had for Gaullism without unflinchingly facing up to what they were admiring. President Nixon was a notorious admirer, and French Gaullists have seen his unprecedented aggrandizement of the American Presidency as the sincerest form of flattery. Dr. Kissinger's case a decade ago was more typical of Western intellectuals. His esteem for de Gaulle was not uncritical, but he invariably found more to blame in American policies than in the French. However naughty the French might be, he tended to scold the Americans for provoking or encouraging them. He expected history to demonstrate "that de Gaulle's conceptions —as distinct from his style—were greater than those of most of his critics." He estimated de Gaulle's conceptions to be "greater than his strength," while America's power was "greater than its conceptions." For most of his career, de Gaulle had been an "illusionist," Dr. Kissinger conceded.[51] But, he might have added, Frenchmen were not the only ones bemused by Gaullist illusions.

Thus the Gaullist détente with the Soviet Union in 1965-66 had its own distinctive *raison d'être*. It cannot be understood merely as an effort on both sides "to relax tensions." Each side was trying to use the other for particular, far-reaching ends. Whatever tensions de Gaulle may have relaxed with the Soviet Union, he enormously increased other tensions with the United States. He was far less interested in relaxing tensions than in utilizing them for his own larger purposes. For de Gaulle as for the Soviet leaders détente was not an end in itself; it was a means to get whatever they wanted to get with or without détente.

VI

The Federal Republic of Germany was the second country admitted to membership in the Soviet Union's exclusive "Détente Club." Since the position and problems of West Germany were vastly different from those of France, the meaning and consequences of its détente were equally different.

The German détente also did not come cheaply. For almost two decades, German policy had rested on three interlocking premises. In essence, they were: German reunification, European Union, and the Atlantic alliance. The first was fundamental; everything else flowed from it. In the Adenauer era, which lasted until 1963, it was

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assumed that a united Germany had to be incorporated or submerged in a larger European Union in order to contain Germany's potentially unruly nationalism and thus make German reunification acceptable to Germany's neighbors. But since a European Union would not be strong enough in the foreseeable future to force or to induce the Soviet Union to disgorge East Germany, it was considered necessary to link Western Europe most closely to the United States through the Atlantic alliance to get the desired result. If West Germany was not yet able to do much about achieving reunification, the minimum demanded by this policy was to do nothing against it. By implication, Germany could not recognize the territorial status quo, such as the Oder-Neisse line, or even formally renounce the pre-war Munich agreement, until a final disposition of Germany's status had been made. Until then, everything had to be conditional and provisional, even the status of West Germany itself.

Ironically, in the early years of the Adenauer regime, the German Social-Democrats took an even harder line than the Christian-Democrats on the quest for German reunification; the Social-Democrats bitterly criticized their rivals for not being inflexible enough and exigent enough on the issue. How legitimate and necessary the Adenauerian *Weltanschauung* once seemed to be can also be seen in the past writings of Dr. Kissinger. "Any West German government must advocate reunification, however moderate it may be in the means it chooses to pursue this objective and however patient it may be in bringing it about," he wrote in the heyday of the Adenauer regime. He admonished: "The Federal Republic would suffer a perhaps irreparable blow if its allies accepted its present frontiers as final—even to the extent of not pressing for unification." He cautioned: "If the Federal Republic is persuaded that it cannot achieve reunification through ties with the West, it is likely to seek its aims through separate dealings with the East."[52]

These words were written fifteen years ago. In that period, Dr. Kissinger was a full-fledged Adenauerian and a part-time Gaullist. His views are worth recalling not because of what they may tell about him today but because they so faithfully reflected the Adenauerian credo that they help to recall how seriously it was taken and how much was involved in giving it up. As long as Adenauer's basic policies prevailed, a German-Soviet détente was out of the question. Or, to put it another way, Adenauerism made German reunification a precondition of détente rather than détente a prerequisite of reunification. The Soviets would, of course, have none of this. They were bent on keeping Germany divided; on gaining recognition for the German Democratic Republic as an independent East German Communist state; on separating West Berlin from West Germany; on obtaining formal recognition of the status quo, especially the Oder-Neisse line; on frustrating an effective European Union; and, almost more than anything else, on divorcing the United States from Europe and breaking up the Atlantic alliance. Adenauer was not only allergic to a German-Soviet détente; any suggestion of a Soviet-American détente made him excessively nervous. Toward the end of his reign, he became so despondent over what the United States was doing for him that he turned for support to Charles de Gaulle—who was heading toward a Franco-Soviet détente. The Adenauer-de Gaulle honeymoon was short-lived because the French were far from dissatisfied with German disunity, were not at all satisfied with Adenauer's "supra-national" view of European unity, and were utterly contemptuous of his attachment to the Atlantic alliance, which they interpreted as little more than slavish dependence on the United States.

All this is hardly ancient history. It occurred only a decade ago, and the issues that caused so much trouble then are no less troublesome now. Couve de Murville recalls with relish and scorn in his memoirs how the West German government was "flabbergasted and terrified" at the prospect of following French "dynamism, audacity, and independence," whenever the United States disapproved of French actions. Not, he adds for good measure, that the French ever expected anything else of the Germans.[53]

THE Franco-Soviet détente of 1965, accompanied by France's withdrawal from NATO, stunned the Germans. From this point on, West German policy was irretrievably shaken from its moorings. The Franco-German rapprochement, the Atlantic alliance, the United States with its increasing entanglement in Vietnam—all seemed to have betrayed the hopes that had been placed in them. During the so-called Grand Coalition of 1966-69, headed by the Christian-Democratic Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger and Social-Democratic Foreign Minister Willy Brandt, more and more was heard of *Ostpolitik* and détente. But, as always, they came with price tags. This was how the tag read to an experienced observer in 1967: "The price held out to the Germans of détente with the Soviet Union is the continued division of Germany and detachment from the United States."[54] It was still possible then to contemplate the price of détente—at least, someone else's détente—with blunt candor and realistic concreteness. Just how much the Soviets would get was not clear until the Grand Coalition fell apart and Brandt took over as Chancellor, with the Free Democratic party as junior partner, in the fall of 1969.

Brandt's *Ostpolitik* went into high gear almost immediately; it resulted in a Soviet-German treaty in August and a Polish-German treaty in November 1970. In effect, both documents formally recognized what all West German governments had

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previously shied away from—the status quo, including the Oder-Neisse line and the border between East and West Germany. To take this step, Brandt's regime had to give West German policy a degree of independence or autonomy that it had never previously had. The German-Soviet détente was before anything else an act of German statesmanship based on a particular interpretation of German "national interest," whatever its effects might be on the so-called European Community and the Atlantic alliance. De Gaulle did not ask the Germans whether to make his détente with the Soviets in 1965, and Brandt did not ask the French —or the Americans—whether to make his détente in 1970.

This form of *Ostpolitik* could not fail to impinge on Germany's *Westpolitik*. Adenauer's *Westpolitik* had been his *Ostpolitik*—that is, he had staked all on the power and determination of the West to force concessions from the East. Brandt's *Ostpolitik* was not in the same sense his *Westpolitik,* but the former now set limits on the latter. The delicate balancing act between East and West was plainly implied by Brandt himself in a notable address from Moscow to his compatriots in August 1970: "Our national interest does not permit us to stand between the East and West. Our country needs cooperation and harmonization with the West and understanding with the East." Virtually paraphrasing de Gaulle, Brandt went on: "Russia is inextricably woven into the history of Europe, not only as an adversary and danger but also as a partner—historical, political, cultural, and economic." He defended the Soviet-German treaty on the ground that "nothing is lost that had not been gambled away long ago. We have the courage to open a new page in history."[55]

This rationale was not altogether disingenuous. It was true that what had been lost had been lost long ago; it also was true that Germany was now giving up all claim to regaining what had been lost. If nothing had really changed, it was hard to see why a new page in history had been opened. Something had surely been changed by the treaty or it would have been inconsequential; the only question was whether it had changed more on the West German side than on the Soviet-East German side.

Compared to the West German détente, the French détente had been comparatively simple. The French could take a most cavalier attitude toward European Union and the Atlantic alliance; the West Germans could not. The latter had to juggle several balls in the air: détente with the East, European Union, the Atlantic alliance, and, above all, relations with East Germany. After the Soviet-German treaty was signed, Chancellor Brandt made known that its effectiveness depended upon a satisfactory settlement of the ever-disturbing fate of Berlin, which, in turn, hinged on an agreement between East and West Germany. This step required an even more far-reaching historic decision on the part of West Germany—whether to give up German unification for the indefinite future, something that Professor Kissinger and others had not long ago regarded as virtually unthinkable.[56] The formula which finally enabled West Germany to give up the substance, while saving the shadow, of reunification was "two German states in one nation." The "two German states" satisfied the inexorable demand of East Germany; the "one nation" held out the consolation for West Germany that both Germanies had something deeper than statehood in common. In any case, the precondition for an East-West German settlement was satisfied by the Allied agreement on Berlin in September 1971, and the full East-West German settlement took the form of a Basic Treaty signed on December 22, 1972. In essence, East Germany got full and unconditional recognition as a sovereign state, and West Germany got freer travel and communication arrangements between the two Germanies.

WE DO NOT have to decide here whether Chancellor Brandt's *Ostpolitik* has been good or bad, right or wrong. It would be difficult in any case to make any definitive judgment of Brandt's policy; the deal between East and West was too unequal. What West Germany contributed to the détente were fundamental concessions on great historic issues. It may not be possible to tell for another generation or more what the full price of the formal recognition of German partition is going to be. In holding that the Federal Republic could not safely abandon reunification or accept the present frontiers as final, Dr. Kissinger and others may still prove to be farsighted. In return, all that East Germany promised to give was relatively limited and ephemeral. The German Communists have sought to protect themselves from closer relations with the West by adopting a policy of *Abgrenzung* (separation). Thus far the fruits of détente in intra-German relations have proven to be most disappointing to West Germany. Some gains have resulted from the Basic Treaty of December 1972, but they have been far more restricted than the West Germans had hoped. Observers have also noted that détente has encouraged a growing mood of "inwardness" in West Germany, accompanied by a growing estrangement from foreign affairs.[57] If the German détente needed a symbol, it was provided by the resignation of Chancellor Brandt because his East German confreres had planted a spy in his midst as a token of mutual trust.

As in the German case, détentes may help to stabilize one area and destabilize another. While public-opinion polls showed that 80 to 90 per cent of West Germans favored reconciliation with the Soviet Union, they also revealed a disquieting trend away from the Western alliance system. From 1969 to 1971, the percentage in favor of

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German neutrality rose from 39 to 50. In the same period, the percentage in favor of a firm military alliance with the United States dropped from 48 to 39.[58] In the fall of 1970, a poll presented twenty different political objectives; consolidation of the Western alliance ranked fifteenth, well toward the bottom. In 1972, a majority for the first time favored a neutrally oriented German foreign policy.[59]

One détente may also work at cross purposes with another. The Franco-Soviet détente of 1965 acutely disturbed the Germans, and the German-Soviet détente of 1969-70 intensely disconcerted the French. The German policy of de Gaulle's successor, Georges Pompidou, was essentially one of taking out an insurance policy against Germany. In 1969, Pompidou remarked: "Germany and its economic weight disturbs me." He used this argument to induce the Italians to get closer to the French.[60] In 1971, when Pompidou permitted Great Britain to enter the Common Market, his purpose was not merely to enlarge the European economic community; it was primarily to use Britain against Germany. As soon as France withdrew its veto, former Prime Minister Edward Heath began to talk with an Anglo-Gaullist accent, as Dr. Kissinger had long ago predicted.[61] Most recently, the French anxiety about Germany was discussed by the arch-Gaullist, Michel Debré, former Premier, Foreign Minister, and Defense Minister, with Marc Ullmann, editor-in-chief of the Paris weekly, *L'Express*. Debré explained, according to Ullmann, that France's nuclear deterrent was "intended to enable France to adopt a position of Swedish-style armed neutrality in the event of West Germany being tempted to participate in the creation of a Finland-style Mittel-Europa." Indeed, the latest French *cauchemar* has been the risk that the American-Soviet détente would open the way to the neutralization of Central Europe, including Germany. Pompidou, according to M. Ullmann, was "obsessed, even more than his predecessor was, with the fear that Germany will one day allow herself to be carried away by the wind from the East" and was "convinced that Germany is bound to seek her reunification in one way or another," despite the terms of the German-Soviet détente. It was all right for French nationalism to set the pace of détente with the Soviet Union, but now "French policy appears to be once again dominated by the fear that Germany may start to play a purely nationalist game." For these reasons, M. Ullmann reported, every conversation with former President Pompidou about foreign policy, no matter how it began, always ended up by "invoking the 'German problem.' "[62]

It might be thought that two détentes would be better than one, but that is not necessarily the case. The French détente was a Gaullist expression of French national interest, and the German détente was a Brandtian expression of German national interest. The two détentes did not mesh because the national interests did not mesh. The Germans interpreted the Franco-Soviet détente as essentially inimical to German interests, and the French interpreted the German-Soviet détente as essentially inimical to French interests. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Soviet-American détente was not universally greeted with joy and applause in Europe.

VII

THE roots of the current Soviet-American détente go back at least a decade. It originated with John F. Kennedy, not Richard M. Nixon.

In a notable speech at the American University in June 1963, President Kennedy put out a feeler for "relaxation of tensions" based on a common "abhorrence of war." We are told by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., that one of Kennedy's motives was to get a Soviet-American front against Communist China which the President considered to be "the long-time danger to the peace." Both the French and of course the Chinese were then interested in *preventing* a Soviet-American détente.[63]

The mini-détente of 1963 was made up of the same kind of deals that turned up in the more ambitious détente of 1972. The main consequences of Kennedy's initiative were the Test Ban Treaty of July 1963 on the military side and the first sale of U.S. grain to Soviet Russia on the commercial side. France and China refused to sign the limited Test Ban Treaty. The grain deal of $250 million of surplus wheat was a bagatelle compared with the gargantuan 1972 deal, but it set a precedent and helped the Soviets to get over a serious agricultural shortage. In Kennedy's entourage, détente was very much in the air, if only in an early phase. "The breathing spell had become a pause, the pause was becoming a détente and no one could foresee what further changes lay ahead," Theodore Sorensen writes of the period.[64] Arthur Schlesinger is somewhat more restrained, cautioning that the accomplishment of these and other measures would have stopped short of "a true détente" which would have required a closing of the "philosophical gap" between the two societies.[65] Whatever it was and however far it went, the Kennedy-Khrushchev détente was cut short by the assassination of the President in November 1963.

Among those most disturbed by this first experiment in détente was Richard Nixon.

The wheat deal particularly perturbed Mr. Nixon. The United States, he said, would be "harming the cause of freedom if it sold wheat to the Soviet Union." He wanted to know: "Why should we pull them out of their trouble and make Communism look better?" He suggested selling the wheat to the Soviet satellites "as a

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business deal, provided that the government involved gives some degree of freedom, more degree of freedom [*sic*] to the people in these countries"—exactly what he thought should not be done nine years later. Mr. Nixon did not like anything about Kennedy's tentative détente because as he put it: "The bear is always most dangerous when he stands with his arms open in friendship."[66]

Yet the rationale for Kennedy's détente was not very different from that adopted by President Nixon for his détente. By 1963, U.S. authorities believed that the United States and the Soviet Union were about evenly matched in antiballistic missiles; the Soviet Union had apparently gained an advantage in very-large-yield nuclear weapons whereas the United States held a lead in medium- and low-yield weapons.[67] Kennedy in 1963 as much as Nixon in 1972 professed to be mainly concerned with stopping or slowing down the nuclear arms race. The times were different but not so different that détente might not have been defended in 1963 on the same grounds that it was defended a decade later. Though Dr. Kissinger does not seem to have commented directly on the Kennedy test-ban treaty or wheat deal, he could not have been overly impressed by them if we may judge from his overall distrust of détente at this time. He certainly did not have a good word to say for them.

In October 1966, even President Johnson made a stab at what he called "reconciliation with the East," but he never got far enough to talk of a more general détente.[68] By the end of 1966, however, the Johnson administration was able to push ahead with the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which was ratified in 1970, and to reach initial agreement on holding strategic-arms-limitation talks (SALT), which were also consummated by the Nixon administration. President Johnson would have liked nothing better than to have taken credit for a Soviet-American détente but the times were not propitious. The Vietnam war on the American side and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 on the Soviet side were too much to overcome.

THE Nixon détente took about two years to set in motion. The final phase seems to have started with the Allied agreement on Berlin in September 1971, which apparently convinced the Nixon administration that a summit meeting in Moscow was feasible.[69] On October 12, President Nixon was confident enough of the outcome to make a public announcement of the meeting to be held the following May. In November 1971, then Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans handed the Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade, Nikolai S. Patolichev, a letter of understanding listing conditions for increased trade relations, after which eleven months of negotiations followed.[70] These three actions indicate that the turning point came in the last four months of 1971.

The *pièce de résistance* of the summit meeting in Moscow in May 1972 was the antiballistic-missile treaty. The technical details need not detain us; what is important for us here is the principle of *quantitative parity* embodied in the agreement. The quantitative aspect made the agreement possible because both sides had reached a point of diminishing returns which made mere increase in numbers exorbitantly wasteful. Since the agreement was reached, it has become unmistakable that the nuclear arms race has turned *qualitative* with emphasis on accuracy and "payload." As a result, both sides are spending more than ever and accusing each other of evading the spirit of the May 1972 treaty by developing new and more sophisticated weaponry. The parity aspect of SALT I is, therefore, inherently temporary and unstable, even if it should be possible to determine, which is doubtful, what parity means in this context. Since the SALT I agreement, whatever its virtues and drawbacks may be, has a five-year time limit, it must be reinforced by a more far-reaching, permanent limitation of strategic arms which is the task of SALT II, so far deadlocked. If SALT II fails, Dr. Kissinger has admitted that "a spiraling of the arms race is inevitable" and that the Soviet Union "could wind up with both more warheads and more destructive warheads than we will possess" by the end of the present decade.[71] Without a successful SALT II, the United States is apt to rue SALT I. The final returns, then, are far from in.

John Newhouse, whose study of SALT I, *Cold Dawn,* has been called "outstanding" and "distinguished" by none other than Dr. Kissinger,[72] concluded that "SALT is an obscure, certainly an elusive enterprise," at the heart of which lies "politics."[73] If that was implicitly true of the SALT I agreement, it was explicitly true of another major document that came out of the May 1972 summit in Moscow—the "Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." In this document there was nothing but politics—the politics of détente.

According to Dr. Kissinger, the idea of setting forth these "basic principles" was initially a Soviet proposal, which the United States "shelved" for some time in order to assure itself that the statement could be "really meaningful." The idea that there should be an expression of general principles was discussed for "some months." The idea that the principles should come out at the end of the summit meeting was "a joint one."[74] We may assume, therefore, that this document was intended to be "really meaningful" and that failure to live up to it would be regarded as equally "meaningful."

It is fortunate that this charter of détente was issued. For if we want to know what détente is

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or implies, we have it here. It is no longer a vague, amorphous "relaxation of tension." It is a concrete, specific code of behavior. Since the Soviet Union proposed the idea in the first place, and several months were spent working it out to the satisfaction of both sides, the Soviet Union as well as the United States can hardly object if they are judged on the basis of the code.

Of the twelve "basic principles," a few were soon put to the test. Both sides committed themselves, among other things, to the following:

- Prevent the development of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of their relations.
- Do their utmost to avoid military confrontations.
- Recognize that efforts to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other, directly or indirectly, are inconsistent with these objectives.
- Have a special responsibility . . . to do everything in their power so that conflicts or situations will not arise which would serve to increase international tensions.
- Make no claim for themselves and would not recognize the claims of anyone else to any special rights or advantages in world affairs. They recognize the sovereign equality of all states.[75]

There was much more, of course, but these five points will do. The last, which appeared as the eleventh principle, was interpreted by Dr. Kissinger as specifically renouncing "any claim to special spheres of influence."[76] In addition, according to a high U.S. official, these self-denying ordinances were specifically applicable to the Middle East and were understood to mean that it "should not be an area over which there should be confrontation between us."[77]

FROM THESE basic principles we know what détente was supposed to mean operationally. Cynics might suppose that no one in his right mind could have taken these vows of international virtue seriously, least of all the statesmen and diplomats who put their names to them. Was it really edifying to sign a piece of paper which fostered the illusion that the Soviet Union was renouncing its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe? The fact remains that the May 1972 charter of détente was taken quite seriously, at least on the U.S. and Israeli side. It entered into their calculations on the chances of another Arab-Israeli conflict and significantly tipped the balance in favor of an optimistic assesment of the pre-war situation. If the May 1972 summit meeting was the euphoric expression of détente, the Arab attack on Israel in October 1973 was the acid test of its genuineness.

For the fact is that if the "basic principles" of détente had been respected, the Egyptian-Syrian attack should not have taken place. It was clearly dependent on massive, extravagant Soviet support; it could not have failed to cause a dangerous exacerbation of U.S.-USSR relations; it had to have as its objective a unilateral advantage for the Soviet Union at the expense of the United States; and it clearly increased international tensions. After all, the United States and the Soviet Union had been, as Secretary Kissinger himself put it, "essentially allied to one of the contenders in the area,"[78] making a Soviet-American crisis an inevitable result of an Arab-Israeli conflict. If the Soviet Union had made any effort to live up to the May 1972 agreement, it should have done its utmost to avoid the Arab-Israeli military confrontation, let alone to make it possible or to urge other Arab nations to get into it. By believing that these were precisely the Middle Eastern implications of détente, the Americans and Israelis opened themselves to being substantially surprised by the Arab attack. One of the determining elements in the intelligence estimate was the answer to the question: Would the Soviet Union consider it more important *not* to disturb its détente with the United States than to help the Arab states to attack Israel? If the first thesis was adopted, the intelligence estimate was inevitably weighted in favor of discounting the possibility of an Arab attack or even of assuming that any confrontation would be initiated by Israel. If the Israelis, as has been revealed, had sufficient information but interpreted it wrongly, the misleading character of détente was partially responsible for the incorrect evaluation.

The result of this and other illusions was some of the most serious miscalculations in recent U.S. history. When the Soviet planes began to evacuate Soviet families from Egypt and Syria on October 4, two days before the attack, some U.S. intelligence officials interpreted the flights as indicative of an Arab-Soviet break, such as the one that had occurred in July 1972, just after the Moscow summit meeting. On the morning of October 6, the day the war broke out, the highest-level U.S. intelligence report, written the previous day, took the view that hostilities were not imminent and even suggested a crisis in Arab-Soviet relations. After news of the war was received in Washington, high-level U.S. policymakers and intelligence experts at first believed that the Israelis had attacked the Arabs. Not since the Bay of Pigs had there been such a consummate politico-intelligence fiasco.

Détentes may be maximal or minimal or anything in between. The "basic principles" of May 1972 represented détente at its maximum. They proved to be an unmitigated snare and delusion. The official American response was curious. President Nixon had put his name to the "basic principles" and had recommended them to Congress as "a solid framework for the future development of better American-Soviet

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relations."[79] Not since Franklin D. Roosevelt has an American President had more cause to regret a public expression of confidence in the good faith of the Soviet leadership. Yet so great was the political investment in détente that both President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger publicly reacted to the Soviet role in the conflict as if the "solid framework" had never existed. An official conspiracy of silence protected the once-acclaimed "basic principles" from public scrutiny.

The new party line fell back on the minimal version of détente. In effect, it reduced the concept of détente to little more than the avoidance of nuclear war between the superpowers. Whereas the original "basic principles" of détente were specific and concrete, Secretary Kissinger now described détente as "inherently ambiguous" and "somewhat ambivalent."[80] The best and almost the only thing he could say in favor of détente was that it limited "the risks of nuclear conflict."[81] Senator J. William Fulbright expounded: "Détente, in its essence, is an agreement not to let these differences [between the two superpowers] explode into nuclear war."[82] A distinguished academic exponent of the new line blamed liberals for "reacting to the collapse of their too-high expectations for friendly relations with a liberalized Soviet regime." He did not say whether he classified President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger among those disenchanted liberals. Détente, we were told, is a process with one, two, three stages and beyond, lasting decades; we are now in stage one, or limited détente, the main business of which is "to reduce the danger of nuclear war."[83] Presumably, the "basic principles" of May 1972 had been a much later stage, and we have been going backward ever since—in order to go forward.

This view of détente distinguishes it from hot war, but it comes perilously close to obliterating the distinction between détente and cold war. The cold war was also considered preferable to hot war in that the conflicts and competition between the so-called superpowers were held within bounds short of actual nuclear warfare. The cold war was in any case never a very satisfactory term; John Lukacs was right to observe that "cold peace" would have been a much better metaphor.[84] Both cold war and détente are accordion-like terms; they can be pushed and pulled in and out so that they may mean almost anything. During the cold war, the United States and the Soviet Union could collaborate in 1956 as if they were partners against Britain, France, and Israel; during the détente, the United States and the Soviet Union could threaten each other in 1973 with preliminary mobilizations or precautionary nuclear alerts. If détente means little more than, as Secretary Kissinger put it, that "confrontations are kept within bounds that do not threaten civilized life,"[85] it is not doing much more than the cold war did. It is small comfort to learn that all other confrontations, short of threatening civilized life, are still compatible with détente. It is time to stop using cold war as a scare term and détente as a sedative term; in their relationship to nuclear war, they are not all that different.

A witty French journalist may have said the last word on these terms. Paraphrasing Clausewitz, he remarked that "détente is the cold war pursued by other means—and sometimes by the same."[86]

VIII

It is easy, as most of us have found to our sorrow, to be bewitched by the day-to-day flow of events. As Secretary Kissinger said at his confirmation hearings, the great challenge before the United States is "to distinguish the fundamental from the ephemeral" and for someone like himself in public life, "to leave something behind that would be valid and permanent."[87] With this one can hardly disagree.

What has been fundamental and permanent in this period of "détente"? Everyone seems agreed that a great transition has been going on, but no one is quite sure what it is or where it is going. No doubt we are too close to events to see them in a long enough perspective. Yet, for better or worse, we must try as best we can to take stock and look ahead. We have hardly begun to face the implications and consequences of the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973. But it is not too soon to raise a few questions about some of the deeper premises which have gone into U.S. policy in the past few years. The effort is worth making if only to bring together some strands of the problems that I have been pursuing.

Nuclear and other wars: Long before détente became a household word, it was evident that nuclear weapons were a rare, special breed, in a different category from the kind of weapons on which the accretion of power had traditionally been based. French strategists have long believed that no country would ever use nuclear weapons because they were self-destructive. These strategists have had the advantage that no one wishes to prove them wrong. A policy which is primarily aimed at preventing nuclear war is still going to leave us with the risk of all the wars that mankind used to have before nuclear war was invented. Experience has shown that the United States and the Soviet Union are quite capable of going up to the brink of nuclear war without going over. They did more or less just that during the missile crisis of October 1962 and again during the Arab-Israeli conflict of October 1973. Secretary Kissinger has given détente the special function of preventing a general nuclear war from arising out of "the rivalries of client states."[88] This was, indeed, the rationale of the "basic principles" of May 1972, but their

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fate is not reassuring. The United States in Vietnam and the Soviet Union in the Middle East have shown that they can take vast risks on behalf of client states without setting off a nuclear war. The possibility of nuclear war is always there, of course, but something else may be more probable. A policy which faces the possible but not the probable leaves something to be desired.

Secretary Kissinger himself suggested where to look for the trouble. "But assuming the present balance holds," he stated at his confirmation hearings, "and granting the strategic significance of what we had both agreed upon, the increasing difficulty of conceiving a rational objective for general nuclear war makes it, therefore, less risky to engage in local adventures."[89] A month later, the Soviet Union engaged in just such a "local adventure." To be sure, it set off a Soviet-American contretemps, the nature of which is not yet entirely clear. But neither side was anxious to push it to a showdown, and the Soviet Union was not penalized for having taken the risk. What operated was not the détente; it was exactly the same thing that had operated during the cold war, namely, the inhibition of the two superpowers against hot nuclear war. The Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973 hardly disproved Secretary Kissinger's rule that the increasing unlikelihood of nuclear war makes local adventure less risky—and, one might add, more likely.

Now a new element has injected itself into this equation. The Americans toward the end of the Vietnam war and the Soviets especially during the latest Arab-Israeli conflict introduced what have been called "precision-guided non-nuclear munitions" or "smart weapons." Among them are the new Soviet hand-held antitank guns and surface-to-air missiles, such as the SAM-6 and SAM-7, which enabled the Egyptian ground troops to surprise and at first take a heavy toll of Israeli tanks and planes. The new technology, it is claimed, permits a hitherto unattainable degree of control and precision which makes possible the use of "non-nuclear weapons in many circumstances where a desperate hope had formerly been pinned to using small nuclear weapons." Bigger and bigger weapons having reached a destructive force beyond rational utilization, it would seem that the only way to gain an advantage was to reverse the trend and develop more discriminating and more accurate smaller weapons against the tank-and-fighter-bomber team that had dominated the battlefield since World War II. Professor Albert Wohlstetter, an acute and well-informed authority in this field, who has made the most penetrating analysis of these developments, has persuasively argued that they have significantly raised the threshold of nuclear war and have substantially increased the likelihood of conventional or non-nuclear warfare.[90]

If so, détente needs some reconsideration from this point of view. The post-October 1973 doctrine of détente has almost exclusively correlated it with the prevention of nuclear war. If conventional war has become less risky as nuclear war has become, in Dr. Kissinger's words, "less and less plausible and a less and less rational method,"[91] and if conventional warfare is making a technological comeback so that it becomes a more plausible and more rational exercise of power, this shift in the credibility of nuclear versus non-nuclear war should be reflected in the function of détente. Primarily it must concern itself with precisely the kind of war which it failed to hold back—and which, as I have tried to show, it may even have encouraged—in October 1973. Too much or one-sided emphasis on preventing nuclear war may be the easy way out; the more difficult and more pressing problem may well be the prevention of conventional or non-nuclear wars.

MARGINAL ADVANTAGES: Dr. Kissinger has also put forward another concept in connection with the "nuclear era" that may be open to question. According to him, this era had changed the balance of power in such a way that neither the Soviet Union nor the United States had anything to fear from each other in the competition for "marginal advantages." This theory was another reason why the Arab-Israeli conflict of October 1973 should not have taken place, theoretically.

In June 1972, soon after the summit meeting in Moscow which was the source of so many of these comforting concepts, Dr. Kissinger maintained that "to the extent that balance of power means constant jockeying for marginal advantages over an opponent, it no longer applies." He explained at some length:

> The reason is that the determination of national power has changed fundamentally in the nuclear age. Throughout history, the primary concern of most national leaders has been to accumulate geopolitical and military power. It would have seemed inconceivable even a generation ago that such power once gained could not be translated directly into advantage over one's opponent. But now both we and the Soviet Union have begun to find that each increment of power does not necessarily represent an increment of usable political strength.[92]

Almost a year later, this consoling notion was written into the President's foreign-policy report to the Congress of May 3, 1973. It contended that, although a certain balance of power was still inherent in any international system, the balance was no longer "the overriding concept," because continual maneuvering for marginal advantages in the nuclear era had become "both unrealistic and dangerous." It went on:

> It is unrealistic because both sides possess such enormous power, small additional increments cannot be translated into tangible advantages

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or even usable political strength. And it is dangerous because attempts to seek tactical gains might lead to confrontations which could be catastrophic.[93]

Five months later, the Arab-Israeli conflict broke out. Evidently the Soviet leaders had not been apt students of Dr. Kissinger's lessons. What did they hope to achieve? No more "geopolitical and military power"? No "increment of power" translatable into "an increment of usable political strength"? No "tactical gains"? Dangerous this continual maneuvering may well be, but "unrealistic"?

This Kissingerian theory was an extrapolation of the "basic principles" of May 1972. He made it seem as if he and the Soviet leaders had seen eye to eye on the practical implications of the principles. Yet whatever the Soviet leaders may have professed to believe, their actions belied their words. They were not deterred by détente in the nuclear era from seeking "marginal advantages" or "increments of power" or "tangible advantages" or "tactical gains."

The true test of a concept is not how persuasive it may appear in the abstract but how close it comes to defining and explaining reality. Dr. Kissinger's theorem on the obsolescence of marginal advantages cannot begin to cope with the reality of the Arab-Israeli war or the competition that has obviously not ceased elsewhere. After that war, Dr. Kissinger somewhat spoiled the beautiful simplicity of his theorem by conceding that the Soviet-American relationship was made up "both of confidence and of competition, coexisting in a somewhat ambivalent manner."[94] If competition is part of the game, what is competition about if not for "marginal advantages," "increments of power," "tangible advantages," and "tactical gains"? In fact, if the theorem is valid, we hardly need a brilliant Secretary of State and a huge foreign-affairs bureaucracy and budget any longer; the nuclear era would by itself virtually insure a cessation of these petty annoyances and permit only the final, apocalyptic conflict. Unnoticed, the theory went all the way back in its implications to John Foster Dulles, who had never been one of Dr. Kissinger's favorite statesmen.

CHINA AND THE "SELF-REGULATING MECHANISM": The role of China in the Soviet-American détente might also be profitably rethought. The once-popular "triangular theory" put China more or less on a par with the United States and the Soviet Union in order to account for the way they were reshuffling their relationships—China with the United States presumably against the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union with the United States presumably against China, and the United States with both of them protesting that it was not against either.

The Soviets were certainly not above using the United States against China. We have been told on good authority that the Soviets on at least three occasions beginning in 1970 tried unsuccessfully to get an agreement with the United States to act jointly in the event of some vague "provocative action" on the part of a third nuclear power, which could only mean China.[95] Though the Chinese have never been so crass, they would certainly take help from anywhere and anyone if they found themselves in real trouble with the Soviet Union. The Chinese-American rapprochement, such as it is, derived in large part from the Chinese assessment that the Soviet Union was a greater threat than the United States.

Dr. Kissinger, it seems, had also chased the will-o'-the-wisp of a "self-regulating mechanism"—through China. In November 1972, he confided to the distinguished journalist, Theodore H. White, that "what the world needed was a self-regulating mechanism" and that the key to such a mechanism was China.[96] A "self-regulating mechanism" would imply that the United States, the Soviet Union, and China were so evenly matched that one would not dare to take on a second without the third.

The Soviet interest in a Soviet-American détente has often been attributed to the supposition that the Soviet leaders consider China a greater threat than the United States. This is another questionable proposition. It may have been true in the late 1960's but the time has passed for it to be accepted uncritically.

One reason why the fear—as distinct from the hostility—of the Soviet Union toward China has diminished is the Soviet military build-up in the Soviet-Chinese border area. According to the best available information, the Soviet Union had 15 divisions in this area in 1968; it has 45, including about 8 tank divisions, in 1974.[97] This enormous increase in only six years was not accomplished at the expense of the Soviet armed forces in the West; it was achieved simply by adding more divisions to an already immense military machine.

The Chinese have given every evidence of knowing that they have more to fear from the Soviets than the latter have to fear from them. De Gaulle liked to believe that the Soviet Union needed the West, and the West had nothing to fear from it, because China had replaced the West as the main Soviet concern.[98] Whether or not de Gaulle was right in his time, the Soviets have had different ideas. They were faced, in essence, with the classical problem of the two-front war; de Gaulle assumed that they had to fall back on the classical solution of concentration; he gave the Soviets the option of concentrating their force in the East or West but not both. In effect, this constraint would put the Soviets at a disadvantage, at least to the extent that they could not afford to take risks in the West if they were tied up in the East. This kind of thinking has had a lulling effect on Western policy; it has also helped in mak-

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ing détente seem much safer than it has been.

Instead, the Soviet leaders chose to build up their armed forces on all fronts in order to give themselves the maximum freedom of action. The triangular theory was never very persuasive for the same reason that the pentagonal theory failed to be convincing—the balance was nowhere as "even" as President Nixon had supposed. The Chinese-American rapprochement may well be—and I think it is—a good thing in its own right, but it is not an insurance policy against the Soviet Union and it is least of all a "self-regulating mechanism."

THE TROUBLED PARTNERSHIP? This was the title, without the question mark, of Professor Kissinger's last book on European-American relations, published in 1965. It indicates how far back the trouble goes. I have put a question mark after the title to cast doubt not on the trouble but on the "partnership."

The term itself was first popularized by former President John F. Kennedy. When he spoke of Europe, he used such phrases as "partners in aid, trade, defense, diplomacy, and monetary affairs," "a partner with whom we could deal on a basis of full equality," "a full and equal partner," and "partners for peace."[99]

This rhetoric provoked some of de Gaulle's most wrathful discourses. If Kennedy was right about the equal European-American partnership, de Gaulle could not be right to declare against French and European dependence on the United States and against the lurking threat of an Anglo-Saxon-Soviet condominium. When the continental Europeans were excluded from the Test Ban Treaty negotiations of 1963, his anguish and anger exploded publicly. His separate détente with the Soviet Union two years later was partly a reply to that treaty and all that it implied to him.

One of those who substantially agreed with de Gaulle on this issue was Dr. Henry Kissinger. In addition to the Test Ban negotiations, he was disturbed by the attempt of the Kennedy administration in 1962-63 to deal directly with the Soviet Union on the status of Berlin. In the Gaullist vein, he protested: "The mere fact of bilateral negotiations raised the specter of a U.S.-Soviet accommodation at the expense of our allies." When Mr. Kennedy spoke of partnership on the basis of full equality, Dr. Kissinger instructed the President sternly: "Real partnership is possible only between equals."[100]

Much of *The Troubled Partnership* two years later was an extended commentary on these themes. It explored at length all the flaws in the concept of partnership from the European point of view. During those years Dr. Kissinger was Europe's most consistent and persuasive academic protagonist in the United States and a hard, relentless critic of U.S. policy; he almost never liked what any President or Secretary of State said or did. If "consultation" was the issue, he countered that it "is far from a panacea"; it was least effective when it was most needed. If the Europeans were recognized as equal in fact, they would want to be more independent than partnership implied; if the United States insisted on retaining its dominant position, the political will of Europe would eventually be broken. About the most cheerful thing he could say was that we might get through "the transition from tutelage to equality" if we mustered enough "wisdom and delicacy," neither of which had been our strong points. In fact, his analysis was filled with such depressing contradictions that he finally took refuge, as we have seen, in the visionary call for an "Atlantic Commonwealth," far beyond the so-called Atlantic alliance.[101]

In his 1968 essay, only a year before he went to Washington as Presidential Assistant, Professor Kissinger still argued, more compellingly than ever, that European-American partnership was not feasible in the existing circumstances. He accused the Americans of invoking "leadership" and "partnership" only to support "the existing pattern" of inequality. He repeated his previous belief that Europe was no longer capable of playing a "global role." He regarded even more extensive consultation, always offered as a cure-all, as nothing more than a "palliative." Instead of partnership, he advised the United States to settle for "political multipolarity," by which he seemed to mean that differences in interest and policy should be accepted with understanding and tolerance. He criticized advocates of détente as being more concerned with atmospherics than with substance. He warned against mistaking a "benign Soviet tone" for the achievement of peace. In short, he was still the same old Kissinger, only more so.[102]

THEN CAME the new Kissinger. In President Nixon's foreign-policy report to the Congress of February 1970, unmistakably written in Dr. Kissinger's familiar cadences, the first principle of American policy with respect to Europe was given as—"partnership." The term itself was used again and again throughout the report, even in headings: "Peace Through Partnership—The Nixon Doctrine" and "A New and Mature Partnership."[103] In the next foreign-policy report of February 1971, headings read: "Towards New Forms of Partnership" and "The Evolution of Partnership." A careful reader would have noted that we were merely in "the necessary transition to an equal partnership" which was "still in progress."[104] Evidently there were partnerships and equal partnerships, a distinction that had not been contemplated when Dr. Kissinger had implied that there were only real and unreal partnerships ("real partnership is possible only between equals").

Had so much really changed between 1968 and

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1970? The answer is that something had changed but not what the ritual use of the term "partnership" suggested. Instead of a change from non-partnership to partnership, Europe was increasingly neglected and shunted aside in favor of the deals with China and Russia. The pentagonal theory was conceived by the President, with or without Dr. Kissinger's assistance, to put Europe on more or less the same plane as the United States, Soviet Union, China, and Japan, "each balancing the other." This arrangement was hardly how a European-American *partnership* should have worked. The discrepancy was never explained.

In his "Year of Europe" speech in April 1973, Dr. Kissinger took over the term in his own name. He referred to "Atlantic partners," to "the principles of partnership," and to Japan as "a principal partner in our common enterprise." He also distinguished between the United States which had "global interests and responsibilities" and our European allies which had only "regional interests."[105] This distinction caused much resentment in Europe, where it was apparently not known or forgotten that he had been saying much the same thing for a decade. Nevertheless, Secretary Kissinger continued to make use of the term "partnership" and "our Atlantic partnership" in later speeches, even when he was trying to explain why the putative partners had been behaving so unpartnerly and why they should change their ways.[106]

If the use of the term were merely a verbal quibble, Dr. Kissinger would not have gone to so much trouble analyzing what was wrong with it when he was still a professor. In fact, the contradiction inherent in his "Year of Europe" speech takes us close to the heart of the matter.

The long-term trouble was the problematic relationship between the United States and Europe. As Dr. Kissinger had pointed out as early as 1963, *real* partnership required equality. Without equality, a so-called partnership could only have a leader and a follower, the dominating and the dominated. He was perfectly right to expose the self-serving shallowness of the Kennedy catchword. In the catchword was concealed a program, one that de Gaulle understood and, therefore, rejected.

How, then, could someone who had seen through this verbiage write it into President Nixon's foreign-policy reports to Congress without holding his nose and, worse still, bandy it about in his own speeches? It is tempting to ascribe this intellectual transmogrification to some venial political sin. The case, however, may be more serious. In April 1973, as we have seen, Dr. Kissinger was capable in one and the same important speech of combining a reference to "partnership" with a reference to an inequality of power and interest which, by his own say-so, made any respectable partnership impossible. Six months later, he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: "For the first time since World War II, all great nations have become full participants in the international system."[107] All? Full? Was he referring merely to the United States, the Soviet Union, and possibly China? Or to our great European partners, too? And if not, how could they be our *partners*?

One strongly suspects a profound confusion of thought. It is not an ordinary confusion; it arises out of the confusing circumstances in which the United States finds itself. In some situations, the U.S. policymaker is still able to think how strong the United States is, compared to the lesser breeds; in other situations, the same person is forced to think how helpless the United States is to enforce its will, even on its friends, let alone its enemies. This duality has produced a kind of official schizophrenia which expresses itself in action and language. Dr. Kissinger has not been immune from the disease.

Americans are not the only ones. The French took the greatest umbrage when Dr. Kissinger consigned our European allies to the lower order of "regional interests." Of all the European powers, France still aspires most to play a world role. But what happened in October 1973 when the French were faced with the Arab-Israeli war and the Arab oil embargo? The French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert whimpered: "We count for little [*Nous pesons peu*]. We will try to count for more."[108] And what of West Germany which not so long ago was considered the "leading European power" and "the leading spokesman for Western Europe"?[109] The German Foreign Minister Walter Scheel has recently unburdened himself: "The Federal Republic is aware of the limits of her influence. She cannot overcome the existing differences between France and America on her own."[110] The British did not have to apologize for anything; they have known their place since November 1956.

THE GREAT GAMBLE: To conclude, I wish to return to the beginning—the crucial effect of détente on our relations with our allies and antagonists. Nothing else is more important for deciding the fate of the United States and the world in the foreseeable future.

The decision on which of these relationships to foster came very early in the Nixon administration. One might not have expected it to go the way it did. In 1968, Dr. Kissinger noted with alarm that NATO was "in disarray," that the emergence of an economically resurgent but politically disunited Europe was inevitably bringing in "a difficult transitional period," and that "Atlantic relations, for all their seeming normalcy, thus face a profound crisis."[111] A year later, the first moves were made which, consciously or not, postponed facing the disarray of NATO, the difficult transitional period, and the crisis in At-

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lantic relations for at least four years. And when, finally, they came in for renewed attention, it was so late that the effort failed embarrassingly and merely called public attention to how intractable the difficulties had become.

Two decisions by the Nixon administration may prove to be of far greater long-range historical importance than anything else. I have already referred to the first—the willingness to take four years to end direct U.S. military intervention in the Vietnam war. The second was partially related but more far-reaching—the attempt to solve our problems through our antagonists, without, or even at the expense of, our friends. Conceivably, we might have tried to bolster both fronts simultaneously, but this effort was never seriously made. This onesidedness made it overly important that the détente with the Soviet Union should come off as a colossal, spectacular success. Even Dr. Kissinger lost his head long enough to hail the SALT I agreement as "without precedent in all relevant modern history." Since SALT I was in a sense the first agreement of its kind, that may not have been saying as much as Dr. Kissinger sought to convey.

The essence of the problem was once stated by Dr. Kissinger with remarkable clairvoyance. The situation at that time was not strictly comparable with the present one, but it was uncomfortably close. Words that seemed to be dealing with the past can now be read as prophecy:

> If the West is to act purposefully in this situation, it must develop a common policy and a specific program. The temptation for bilateral approaches is great. Each national leader, depending on his temperament, has visions of appearing as the arbiter of a final settlement or of adding Communist pressures to his own as a bargaining device within the [Atlantic] Alliance. This sets up a vicious circle. Since leaders generally do not reach eminence without a touch of vanity and since some stake their prestige on their ability to woo their Soviet counterparts, they tend to present their contacts with the Soviets as a considerable accomplishment. But the real issues have gone unresolved because they are genuinely difficult; hence they are usually avoided during summit diplomacy in favor of showy but essentially peripheral gestures. The vaguer the East-West discourse, the greater will be the confusion in the West. Moreover, each leader faces two different audiences: toward his own people he will be tempted to leave the impression that he has made a unique contribution to peace; toward his allies he will be forced to insist that he will make no settlement in which they do not participate. Excessive claims are coupled with reassurances to uneasy allies which are in turn tempted to pursue bilateral diplomacy.

Where would it end? Here was how Dr. Kissinger saw it nine years ago:

> Such a course is suicidal for the West. It will stimulate distrust within the Alliance. The traditional Western balance-of-power diplomacy will reappear, manipulated by the Kremlin. Any Soviet incentive to be responsible will vanish. The Soviet leaders will be able to overcome their difficulties with the assistance of the West and without settling any of the outstanding issues. Since in the Kremlin—as in the West—there must be many who consider the status quo preferable to change, the result is likely to be diplomatic paralysis obscured by abstract declarations about peace and friendship.[112]

While many of these sentiments seem to be as fresh as ever, the parallels are, of course, not exact. Nevertheless, the real issues have certainly not been resolved, the Soviet incentive to be responsible in the Middle East vanished some time between May 1972 and October 1973, and none of the outstanding issues has been finally settled. There is something uncanny about the repetition of the suicide theme at the end of 1972 by the U.S. Ambassador to the European Community, J. Robert Schaetzel, just after his resignation: "What has been happening to U.S.-E.C. relations is a kind of common death wish."[113]

No doubt we are still far from suicide or death. But we are no nearer safety and health if such grave warnings could have been issued by Dr. Kissinger nine years ago and by Ambassador Schaetzel less than two years ago. The central fact of the past five years is that détente with the East has beguiled us while deterioration in the West has beset us. It will not help at this late date to quarrel over which has been more to blame, Europe or the United States; there is more than enough blame for all. It is wasteful of energies for the United States to be exasperated with Europe or Europe to be exasperated with the United States; the accumulation of exasperation is part of the problem. Little is gained by adding up the resources of the European Community and finding that they exceed those of the Soviet Union or that their gross national product comes to about two-thirds that of the United States. Europe is like an optical illusion; it looks formidable only when it is viewed in the abstract as a whole; it shrinks and shrivels as soon as it is examined country by country in the light of each one's political and social reality. Only last month, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger tried to inject some realism and clarity into our understanding of the position of the European states. He asserted that "contrary to the view that they are robust states with the strength to defend Europe by themselves, they are relatively weak states" and that "the most critical region in the world continues to be Western Europe."[114]

The policy of détente, whatever we may think of it, would not be so equivocal if turning toward

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the East had not been accompanied by turning away from the West. While lip-service was being paid to European-American "partnership," to the Atlantic alliance as the "cornerstone" of American foreign policy, and to concern about the resurgence of American isolationism, the concept of partnership became more and more of a mockery, the cornerstone was relegated to a corner, and ardent support for the policy of détente as it has worked out in practice has come from some of our most eminent neo-isolationists. There is a natural affinity between resurgent isolationism and illusory détentism; if we can persuade ourselves that we can solve our problems directly with our erstwhile enemies, why do we need to bother with allies? The great gamble inherent in this kind of détente is that we are going to be in worse trouble than ever unless détente pays off in continuous, long-lasting Soviet good-will and good behavior. For over four years, détente was pursued so single-mindedly and to the exclusion of so many other interests that it became a go-for-broke operation. The best criticism of such a policy may be found in Dr. Kissinger's past writings, which is why I have cited them so often.

Kto kogo? Who-whom? It was Lenin's favorite formulation of the crucial political question. It may be more freely translated as: "Who does what to whom?"[115] It is not a bad way of thinking about détente.

Notes

[1] New York *Times*, October 31, 1973 and March 12, 1974.

[2] George F. Kennan, "Europe's Problems, Europe's Choices," *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1974, p. 8.

[3] Henry A. Kissinger, *The Troubled Partnership* (McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 4; Richard M. Pfeffer, ed., *No More Vietnams?* (Harper & Row, 1968), p. 11; *Foreign Affairs*, January 1969, p. 101; Press conference, March 21, 1974.

[4] *Foreign Affairs*, January 1963, p. 285; *The Troubled Partnership*, pp. 57, 251.

[5] February 1, 1973 (in *Department of State Bulletin*, April 2, 1973, p. 394).

[6] Speech before American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1954; speech of March 15, 1965 (*Congressional Record*, House of Representatives, September 2, 1965, pp. 21928-30); "Asia After Vietnam," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1967, pp. 111-25.

[7] *The Troubled Partnership*, pp. 9, 232.

[8] Stephen R. Graubard, *Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind* (Norton, 1973), pp. 225-26.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

[10] *No More Vietnams?*, pp. 11-13.

[11] "The Vietnam Negotiations," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1969, pp. 233-34.

[12] November 2, 1972 (in *Department of State Bulletin*, November 20, 1972, p. 605). One wonders whether Mr. Nixon had in mind the kind of peace that General W. C. Westmoreland, the former U.S. commander in Vietnam and Army Chief of Staff, recently described: "A full year after the cease-fire, which many thought would bring peace to Vietnam, the country is still ravaged by war, with the prospect of continued bloodshed ahead. The ceasefire did bring about an end to United States military action, cause our 588 prisoners to be released, and set the stage for a truce in Laos. But little else has been accomplished. During the last year, there have been more than 10,000 hostile contacts and over 13,000 armed attacks resulting in the deaths of more than 33,000 Communists and 6,000 South Vietnamese military men. Also there have been thousands of civilians killed, injured, or abducted in the South" (New York *Times*, April 18, 1974).

[13] July 6, 1971 (in *Department of State Bulletin*, July 26, 1971, p. 93).

[14] January 31, 1973 (*ibid.*, February 19, 1973, p. 195).

[15] Albert Wohlstetter, statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, April 23, 1969 (*Congressional Record*, Senate, May 1, 1969, p. 10957 note). The persistent underestimation of Soviet military capabilities is dealt with at length in Albert Wohlstetter, "Is There a Strategic Arms Race?," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1974.

[16] Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush, *Department of State Bulletin*, April 23, 1973, p. 479.

[17] Walter Slocombe, *The Political Implications of Strategic Parity*, Adelphi Papers, International Institute for Strategic Studies, No. 77, May 1971, p. 5.

[18] Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Power and Europe 1945-1970* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 429.

[19] Oriana Fallaci, "Kissinger," the *New Republic*, December 16, 1972, p. 20.

[20] NATO Ministerial Council Meeting, April 10, 1969.

[21] *U. S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A New Strategy for Peace*, A Report to the Congress by Richard Nixon, President of the United States, February 18, 1970, pp. 27-31.

[22] February 25, 1971 (in *Department of State Bulletin*, March 15, 1971, p. 307).

[23] July 6, 1971 (*ibid.*, July 26, 1971, p. 96).

[24] *Time*, January 3, 1972, p. 15.

[25] Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Affairs Nathaniel Samuels, April 14, 1972 (in *Department of State Bulletin*, May 1, 1972, p. 633).

[26] Deputy Secretary of State John N. Irwin II, October 18, 1972 (*ibid.*, November 20, 1972, p. 612).

[27] Counselor of the Department Richard F. Pedersen, September 7, 1972 (*ibid.*, October 2, 1972, p. 371).

[28] David Landau, *Kissinger, The Uses of Power* (Houghton Mifflin, 1972), p. 26.

[29] *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

[30] Stanley Hoffmann, "Will the Balance Balance at Home?," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1972, p. 80.

[31] November 5, 1972 (in *Department of State Bulletin*, December 4, 1972, p. 654).

[32] February 1, 1973 (*ibid.*, April 2, 1973, p. 395).

[33] March 21, 1973 (*ibid.*, April 9, 1973, p. 419).

[34] David Calleo, *The Atlantic Fantasy: The U.S., NATO, and Europe* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. ix.

[35] *The Necessity for Choice* (1961), p. 204; *The Troubled Partnership* (1965), p. 217.

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[36] *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (Harper, 1957), pp. 142-43, 350.

[37] *The Necessity for Choice,* pp. 178-81, 194-95.

[38] *The Troubled Partnership,* pp. 192, 197-98.

[39] "Central Issues of American Foreign Policy," in *Agenda for the Nation* (The Brookings Institution, 1968), pp. 599, 608-9.

[40] *The Necessity for Choice,* pp. 172-73.

[41] *The Troubled Partnership,* pp. 248-49.

[42] September 5, 1969 (in *Department of State Bulletin,* September 22, 1969, p. 259).

[43] "The condition of the *Soviet economy* is clearly the primary determinant of present Soviet foreign policy" (Marshall D. Shulman, *Foreign Affairs,* October 1973, p. 43). "The first and most decisive reason for this change in [the direction of a more moderate and more flexible] foreign policy was the stagnation in the Soviet economy" (Wolfgang Leonhard, *ibid.,* p 66).

[44] October 6, 1970 (in *Department of State Bulletin,* November 23, 1970, pp. 642-43).

[45] Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre* (Plon, 1959), Vol. III, pp. 62-70.

[46] *Ibid.,* pp. 179-80.

[47] Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires d'espoir* (Plon, 1970), Vol. I, pp. 175-76.

[48] Maurice Couve de Murville, *Une politique étrangère 1958-1969* (Plon, 1971), pp. 194, 206-12. Kosygin also made some most revealing remarks about China and the United States more than six years before President Nixon's pilgrimage to Peking: "China was also disquieting [to Kosygin], but perhaps the major preoccupation from this angle was [for the Russians] to know what the game of the United States would be in the future. In fact, the most alarming [*redoutable*] unknown factor was the possible Chinese-American connection [*conjonction*]" (p. 212).

[49] *Ibid.,* pp. 78-79, 218-21.

[50] *Mémoires d'espoir,* Vol. I, p. 177.

[51] *The Troubled Partnership,* pp. 44, 63.

[52] "The Search for Stability," *Foreign Affairs,* July 1959, pp. 539-42. In all of his extant writings, Dr. Kissinger never changed his position on these questions; see *Foreign Affairs,* January 1963, pp. 263, 269, 271, and *The Troubled Partnership* (1965), pp. 216-18.

[53] Couve de Murville, *op. cit.,* p. 273.

[54] Marshall D. Shulman, "'Europe' versus 'Détente,'" *Foreign Affairs,* April 1967, p. 396.

[55] *Bundeskanzler Brandt Reden und Interviews* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1971), pp. 203-4.

[56] Among the others were such notable authorities as Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Alternative to Partition* (McGraw-Hill, 1965, pp. 137-40) and Professor Hans J. Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (Praeger, 1969, pp. 170, 177-81).

[57] W. E. Paterson, "Foreign Policy and Stability in West Germany," *International Affairs* (London), July 1973, pp. 426-27.

[58] Josef Korbel, *Détente in Europe: Real or Imaginary?* (Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 204, 242.

[59] Werner Kaltefleiter, *Orbis,* Spring 1973, pp. 91-92.

[60] *Le Point* (Paris), December 10, 1973, p. 56.

[61] "The great-power status which Great Britain has so tenaciously sought to sustain throughout the postwar period can now be achieved only through the closest association with the Continent. But to do this effectively Great Britain may have to adopt views similar to France's, ameliorating them with its own subtle style" ("Strains on the Alliance," *Foreign Affairs,* January 1963, p. 283).

[62] Marc Ullmann, "Security Aspects in French Foreign Policy," *Survival,* International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, November-December 1973, pp. 262-67.

[63] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days* (Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 904. Theodore C. Sorensen quotes Kennedy as saying, "We are not wedded to a policy of hostility to Red China. I would hope that . . . the normalization of relations . . . between China and the West . . . would be brought about," which would suggest that Kennedy anticipated Nixon in at least the projection of a policy of rapprochement with China. But Sorensen also says that Kennedy regarded the "isolation of the Chinese" as a major gain of the Test Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union in 1963 (Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy,* Harper & Row, 1965, pp. 665, 736).

[64] Sorensen, p. 745.

[65] Schlesinger, p. 921.

[66] New York *Times,* October 9, 1963, p. 19, and October 25, 1963, p. 18. As far back as 1956, when Adlai Stevenson had called for a test ban, Nixon had denounced it as "catastrophic nonsense" and had given as one reason that the Russians "haven't kept many agreements as we well know" (New York *Times,* October 4, 1956, p. 22, and October 5, 1956, p. 16). He was at least consistent—until he had to deal with the Russians himself.

[67] William F. Kaufmann, *The McNamara Strategy* (Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 152-58.

[68] Speech of October 7, 1966.

[69] President Nixon at least three times named the "understandings on Berlin" as the turning point which had led to the May 1972 summit meeting in Moscow (*Department of State Bulletin,* January 24, 1972, p. 81, and June 12, 1972, p. 803, and interview in *Time,* January 3, 1972, p. 14).

[70] Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, William C. Armstrong, *ibid.,* December 25, 1972, p. 721.

[71] *Nomination of Henry A. Kissinger:* Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, September 1973, Part I, p. 122.

[72] *Ibid.,* p. 111.

[73] John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973), p. 272.

[74] *Department of State Bulletin,* June 26, 1972, pp. 886, 894.

[75] The full text of the "Basic Principles" may be found in the *Department of State Bulletin,* June 26 1972, pp. 898-99.

[76] *Ibid.,* p. 896.

[77] Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Joseph J. Sisco, *ibid.,* April 23, 1973, p. 485.

[78] Press conference of March 21, 1974.

[79] Address to joint session of Congress, June 1, 1972.

[80] Press conference of March 21, 1974.

[81] Interview in Peking, November 12, 1973 (New York *Times,* November 13, 1973).

[82] *Congressional Record,* Senate, November 9, 1973, p. S-20136.

[83] Marshall D. Shulman, New York *Times,* March 10, 1974.

[84] John Lukacs, *A New History of the Cold War* (Anchor Books, 1966), p. 273.

[85] Press conference of October 25, 1973.

[86] André Fontaine, *Le Monde,* October 30, 1973.

[87] *Nomination of Henry A. Kissinger, op. cit.,* pp. 10, 118.

[88] Press conference of November 21, 1973.

[89] *Nomination of Henry A. Kissinger, op. cit.,* p. 101.

[90] This paragraph is based on Albert Wohlstetter, "Threats and Promises of Peace: Europe and America in the New Era," *Orbis,* Winter 1974, pp. 1107-44. The entire article should be compulsory reading for anyone interested in this subject.

[91] *Nomination of Henry A. Kissinger, op. cit.,* p. 43.

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[92] June 15, 1972 (in *Department of State Bulletin,* July 10, 1972, p. 40).

[93] *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: Shaping a Durable Peace,* p. 232.

[94] Press conference of November 21, 1973.

[95] Marshall D. Shulman, *Foreign Affairs,* October 1973, p. 45. More details of the 1970 approach are given by John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn,* pp. 188-89.

[96] Theodore H. White, *The Making of the Presidency 1972* (Bantam edition, 1973), p. xviii.

[97] Alastair Buchan, *Power and Equilibrium in the 1970s* (Praeger, 1973), p. 18 [for 1968]; *The Military Balance 1973-1974,* International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1974, p. 6 [for 1974].

[98] In a press conference on November 10, 1959, de Gaulle said that Soviet Russia needed détente in the West in order "to reckon with the yellow multitude which is China" and which threatened to expand at the expense of Russia, "a white nation which has conquered part of China" *(Discours et Messages,* Plon, 1970, Vol. III, p. 130). A decade later, he wrote retrospectively of his belief in 1958 that the Russians would be attracted to détente with the West because of "the eternal alternation which dominates their history and which today makes them turn their worries toward Asia rather than toward Europe on account of the ambitions of China and provided that the West does not threaten them" (*Mémoires d'espoir,* Vol. I, p. 213). On July 29, 1963, de Gaulle remarked sardonically that the Sino-Soviet conflict could "add a note of sincerity to the poems [*couplets*] which the USSR devotes to peaceful coexistence" (*Discours et Messages,* Vol. IV, pp. 122-23).

[99] John F. Kennedy, *The Burden and the Glory* (Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 16, 106, 111, 114.

[100] "Strains on the Alliance," *Foreign Affairs,* January 1963, pp. 267, 284.

[101] *The Troubled Partnership, op. cit.,* pp. 7-8, 227, 229, 234, 248.

[102] "Central Issues of American Foreign Policy," *Agenda for the Nation,* pp. 596-99, 607, 609.

[103] *A New Strategy for Peace,* pp. 5, 8, 29.

[104] *Building for Peace,* pp. 11, 25-6.

[105] *Department of State Bulletin,* May 14, 1973, pp. 594, 598.

[106] Speech in London to the Pilgrims, December 12, 1973.

[107] *Nomination of Henry A. Kissinger, op. cit.,* p. 8.

[108] In the National Assembly, October 17, 1973 *(Le Monde,* October 19, 1973, p. 10).

[109] Lawrence L. Whetten, *Germany's Ostpolitik* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 208, 212.

[110] New York *Times,* March 29, 1974, p. 3.

[111] *Agenda for the Nation, op. cit.,* pp. 594-96.

[112] *The Troubled Partnership, op. cit.,* pp. 205-6.

[113] *Fortune,* November 1972, p. 148.

[114] *U.S. News & World Report,* May 13, 1974, p. 44.

[115] According to the official custodian of Leninism in the United States, Gus Hall, General-Secretary of the Communist Party, U.S.A., détente means, among other good things, "retreat" by and "struggle" against the United States (*Political Affairs,* March 1974, pp. 7, 9).

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The Truants

"Partisan Review" in the 40's

William Barrett

PHILIP RAHV is dead, and Mary McCarthy has given us a moving tribute, a public love-letter to redeem her cruel caricature of him years ago in *The Oasis*. Philip would have been pleased, even more pleased that it appeared on the first page of the Sunday *Times Book Review*. He thought about death a good deal, about his own death particularly and the mark he might leave, and in his more irritable moments he used to grumble that the *Times* probably wouldn't even give him an obit. It would be nice if he knew that the *Times* had come through after all.

Delmore Schwartz is also dead. Death begins to gather us together into a "generation." A young sociologist, Steve Longstaff, has been going the rounds taping us on our memories of *Partisan Review* in the late 40's and 50's. He is doing a Ph.D. thesis on the subject; apparently the fortunes and achievements of the magazine in that period will shed light on the opinion-making processes in our nation. The years I had thought sunk deep into national oblivion now seem worth salvaging. The *Times* officially announces that *PR* was "the best literary magazine in America" during that period. Definitely, the country is in a wave of nostalgia; the 20's, 30's, and even the 50's have had their revivals. The 40's were mostly taken up by the war, and that has had enough documentation. But the last part of the decade, which was unique and different, is worth remembering for its own sake. Miss McCarthy's tribute stirs memories, inevitably very different from hers. While there is still time, before I'm finally gathered into my generation, maybe I should try to get in a word or two of my own.

I JOINED the staff of *Partisan Review* just after the end of the war in the fall of 1945. (*The* war for our generation, of course, was World War II; and we have had to learn the quick passage of time by having to qualify the expression for younger people, whose own particular wars were Korea or Vietnam.) I felt in a mood of temporary and heady freedom—free from the war and free, for how long I did not know, from the academic world. I was determined to hang on, catch my breath in some sort of Bohemian existence before going back to teaching, and then only if I had to. I was in Greenwich Village (the West Village, naturally, for that was the only real Village there was in those days) in the inevitable cold-water flat. (They were much cheaper in those days: my rent was $22 a month.) And I was only a few short blocks away from my old and dear friend Delmore Schwartz, whom I saw nearly every evening. A period for me of rather empty but blissful pause between the past and whatever might come.

This peace was shattered when Delmore burst in one afternoon to announce that I was now an associate editor of *Partisan Review*. This was startling news indeed since absolutely no word had ever been said between us on the matter even as a remote possibility. But this unexpectedness was part of Delmore's style; and he stood before me now grinning and elated, in the exuberant phase of what was later to become established and recognizable as part of a regular manic-depressive cycle. He seemed pleased, as if he had put over some coup, and I couldn't get from him what it was. My own emotions were quite confused: embarrassment, humility, and I suppose sneaking around underneath, some elation too. I had wanted to be detached; but if I was to have any kind of attachment, this would be the kind I would want. At the same time I felt I had no claims to the job. I had spent the decade of the 30's in the academic world, getting a degree in philosophy and establishing myself as a teacher. I had written only two incidental pieces for the magazine, one under an assumed name, both reporting on the war in Italy; but I didn't know that these would qualify me even to be a reliable contributor. For someone like myself who had been living in a university town during the late 30's, *Partisan Review* during those years had been the breath of life amid the academic provincialism that surrounded me. I read it religiously; and out of the forlorn feelings of exile of a native New Yorker I imagined the exciting and exalted life they (the editors and their close contributors) led back there in the capital. I felt a little abashed now to enter that charmed circle.

WILLIAM BARRETT is professor of philosophy at New York University and the author of *Irrational Man, Time of Need,* and other works.

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SOME reassurance came a day later from William Phillips. He called on me in the afternoon, embarrassed at the dinginess of my surroundings but perhaps more at finding words for what he wanted to say. I remember very vividly and still gratefully that meeting, though I can't remember exactly what was said. The substance was that William wanted to reassure me that there was a place for me on the magazine, that I would indeed be able to contribute something, and that *PR* could use some fresh blood. The point that struck me then, but even more strongly now as I recall it, is that William had the human tact to sense what my uncertainty might be, even though he had not talked with me since Delmore's announcement. Delmore did not have it because he was filled with maniacal glee at having an ally to add to the fun. Philip did not have it, well, because Philip was . . . Philip —even though of the three he was, editorially speaking, to make the most use of me later. But William was like this, it was his peculiar gift; and what he contributed to the magazine could not be fully known by those on the outside. He provided the oil and grease to keep the human parts of the machine going. And for those who needed reassurance at times of personal trouble, something very different from flattery, William was always there.

Philip Rahv, I knew, would be a more formidable obstacle to face. I had met him a few times in the past, and stood in awe of him. For someone younger in years and many years younger in experience, Philip was quite overwhelming in the impression he made. The impressiveness was not of art or contrivance but of nature: he couldn't help thrusting himself forward. "He's a manic impressive," Delmore once joked—a *mot* which had its somber overtones coming from his own deeply gathering manic-depressive symptoms. Philip could orate to you over a point on which you were already in agreement with him as if he were in fact trying to persuade a large audience. With people less familiar or of a status that required deference he could tone his volume down and strike a grave and almost magisterial note.

One of the brightest and pleasantest memories of those years is William Phillips's apartment. For some of us it was a kind of home away from home, and no doubt we abused his amiability and patience. Nevertheless, his apartment continued during the late 40's as a center for whatever currents were alive at the time. "Salon" is too stuffy a word for it. It was always informal, sometimes rowdy in argument, but open in its ideas and attitudes. All kinds of people flowed through it, and visiting foreigners—like Camus and Merleau-Ponty—entered easily into the general verbal melee. I can't imagine anything quite like it existing now, for it had the effluvium of the postwar years when the fabric of American society, which had come through the war unshaken, seemed unshakable and American economic power unlimited. William's wit and lucid argument were a good part of those evenings.

Oddly enough, Philip Rahv himself on some of those occasions at William's was the most relaxed I ever saw him. After a few drinks he would throw himself into the general uproar of argument, shouting out any outrageous idea that came into his head. And he could say the most hair-raising things when he felt like it. It was his way of blowing off steam; he got rid of his stupid ideas in moments like that as if to keep them out of his writing. By contrast an evening at the Rahvs' was a much more sedate, careful, and measured affair; and one had sometimes, depending on the guests, to tread warily. The late Isaac Rosenfeld, who was a sometime guest until Philip decided he was no longer a "winner," once described a typical evening very well: "It was like throwing darts."

De mortuis nil nisi bonum is a maxim I subscribe to with some reservations. Our charity is needed more by the living, who are still struggling to cope with things, and who are easily upset by any disobliging remark. And when can one really try to be candid about other people except when they are not listening? On the other hand, one shouldn't write about the dead out of malice and hatred; or if one does, one should make clear that these are the premises from which one writes. Philip did a devastating piece on Delmore Schwartz in the *New York Review* not so long ago that took my breath away. It astounded me that he should have written it at all. The two had come to loathe each other, and that loathing was one of the things that made meetings at *Partisan Review* distasteful in my last days there. His piece was very good in its own terms, but it presented Delmore personally in the period of his very rapid decline. And Philip knew this was not the whole story; he *had* known Delmore earlier (and indeed courted him then) when Delmore had the being of a poet, alive and vibrant. So I must emphasize that I'm not writing here out of hatred or the desire to tear Philip down. His death would not have released so many memories if I had not been deeply moved by it. But he was a complex, often self-contradictory and secretive character, and any tribute to him that failed to notice this complexity would be insipid. I admired his gifts; at times I liked him as an engaging ruffian even when morally I felt I shouldn't; at other times he frightened, irritated, and depressed me. In the end, years after I had left *Partisan Review*, on the few occasions I met him, I found that I had come to like him quite a bit. I saw then the personality that was unfailingly there for some other people outside the inner circle. The trouble was if you had to have constant practical dealings with Philip. No man is a hero to his valet, Goethe said; and Philip, who tended to push his collaborators into the category

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of servant, must bear some of the consequences of the servant's-eye deflation.

II

BUT I get ahead of myself. Though William's visit had made me feel better, I wasn't altogether reassured, and I hadn't yet attended an editorial meeting when I ran into Philip Rahv in Washington Square. I was to run into him there a lot in the next years; he was, when the mood struck him, as lazy as a cat, and the long afternoons when he should have been working he would let idle by in some ramble through the Village. The area he patrolled was only a few square blocks, and he usually ended on his way home by going through the Square. He mentioned nothing about my coming on the magazine, but instead launched into a long harangue, mainly about how Stalin was gobbling up Eastern Europe while fellow-traveling liberals here were applauding. I said very little, partly out of timidity but also partly because as his talk went on I began to feel physically uncomfortable. It was a cold late afternoon in fall, colder than I had thought when I left home, and I had put on no coat. I was beginning to shiver a little, but Philip paid no attention, having captured a passive ear and riding in the full flood of his oration. He was always, or nearly always, worth listening to, and I was fascinated—but freezing. I can't remember how I managed to get away.

Philip was promptly ready with his verdict on me, and I got it back from Delmore, almost immediately, a day or so later. "Will has no ideas," he told Delmore. I wondered how he could conclude this when I had hardly said more than two words. It also struck me, faintly then, but strongly through later experience, that Philip could be singularly incautious, for surely he must have known if he'd stopped for a moment to think that Delmore would report his words back to me. When the mood was on him, which was often, he could and did speak witheringly about people he knew, and more than once the words got back to the original person. For a man whose mind was so filled with plots and counter-plots, he could be very incautious.

Still, I was puzzled about this business of not having ideas. It was—as Mary McCarthy notes, and correctly—a constant judgment he made of other writers and intellectuals. Edmund Wilson, for example, was a target. "Wilson is a good writer," he would say, "but he has no ideas." Wilson was something of an obsession with him, "like a boil on the brain," to use one of his own expressions. Wilson held the fame and position he would have liked for himself. I think he felt he was really a better literary critic, but had produced less and was less popular. *Axel's Castle*, he once remarked to me, was the first appearance of the middlebrow phenomenon in America. I persisted in asking Delmore to explain what Philip meant when he said I had no ideas. "Well, you know," Delmore finally said, "something like 'Redskin and Paleface'"—the title of one of Philip's best-known essays. Delmore was very perceptive here. The "ideas" that concerned Philip were always concrete and intuitive, usually dramatic or colorful simplifications of already known but diffuse literary or political perceptions. He had little liking and in fact very little capacity for abstract ideas as such. This was a weakness, however, which he turned into a strength, for it kept his feet on the ground and his mind attuned to the concrete. Still, it was ironical that he who so readily condemned other people for not having ideas was always uncomfortable with somebody like Harold Rosenberg simply because of Rosenberg's dazzling facility with ideas.

Delmore Schwartz has been cited quite a bit here, and I think I should make clear that they are remarks from a time when he had most of his marbles. He was to deteriorate very rapidly, and perhaps I was slower than others to notice the change and finally accept it as irrevocable. When you've known and loved somebody for a long time you tend to look through the person that is and see the person that was. But at the time of which I write Delmore's was still a brilliant and perceptive mind. Philip fascinated him because Philip made such a good subject for his own aphoristic wit. The *bon mot* inevitably simplifies and dramatizes a bit, but Delmore on Philip was never completely off target. For example, one that particularly delighted Delmore: "Philip does have scruples," said very reflectively and gravely; a judicious pause; then, with a sudden wide grin, "but he never lets them stand in his way." Extreme, yes, but not altogether without its point. Later on, Delmore was taken over by his own fantasies, and couldn't be cited as a reliable witness on anything. I had to break with him because he demanded of a close friend that he enter the same world of madness as his own. But that was not till some years later, around 1950 or so.

At the first editorial meetings I was mostly silent and listened. I had a lot to learn, and not all of it was about literature and world politics. One of the first times I opened my mouth was to suggest Harold Rosenberg for a certain kind of piece we had been discussing. (I hardly knew Rosenberg except through his writing, but he seemed right for the particular subject we had in mind.) My remark was passed over in silence. I was in no position to insist, but later I asked Delmore why Rosenberg wasn't writing for the magazine anymore. "Didn't you know?" Delmore said, and gave me the story. Philip, who had been one of the leaders in the Henry James revival, had put out a collection of James's stories. Rosenberg, glancing at the book, had remarked to someone, "The Henry James delicatessen!" and the remark had gotten back to Philip. From that time on, Philip

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swore, Rosenberg would never appear in the magazine again. Though at times he could walk quite callously over other people's sensitivities, Philip was morbidly sensitive to any slight toward himself.

WHATEVER his personal animosities, though, he was an extraordinary editor. The assessment of just how good has to be left to others less close to him and to the magazine's operation. But we shouldn't attribute to him any quasi-supernatural powers of divination. He is supposed, for example, to have "discovered" a number of writers, including Saul Bellow. This notion of an editor's discovering a writer, I suspect, is more than a little colored by romantic fantasy. Conjure up the image of the editor driving through the countryside and seeing a ploughboy in the fields; there comes a divine flash from nowhere, and he stops the car to talk with the youth; they walk into the barn, where sure enough a manuscript lies hidden, and lo! we have another Faulkner. Usually the writer has to break through on his own. Nobody discovered Saul Bellow but Saul Bellow. He appeared with a manuscript, and that was the beginning of a career. Originally he was part of what the older *PR* editors called "the Chicago School," which included Isaac Rosenfeld and H. J. Kaplan. I admired the loyalty with which Bellow stuck to his two friends, particularly Isaac; over and over he would tell me what a talented, talented guy Isaac was, with a fervor that almost placed his own gifts in shadow. What an editor can do for a writer, once he has broken through, is give him encouragement and even flattery against moods of depression. Philip withheld these from Isaac when in fact Isaac needed them most. Isaac was indeed very gifted, but he chose to lose himself, go up blind alleys; there would always be time, he thought, to find himself again. He was wrong; there never is enough time, it goes too fast, it went too fast for the years and the period I'm speaking about. Isaac's luck ran out, he collapsed of a heart attack on a Chicago street. It's not enough to have talent, you have to have luck; and Isaac was almost constitutionally unlucky. He loved to play the buffoon, and it was hard to talk to him without starting to kid him; but this was given and taken in good humor. Philip, however, treated him roughly. And Philip, in turn, was one of the few people of whom Isaac spoke with a real grudge.

Philip's gifts as an editor were really those of a certain conservatism. By this I don't mean any conservative ideology, but a certain conservatism of temperament. He had staked out, slowly and laboriously, a world for himself, and he wanted the magazine to live within it with him. Mary McCarthy observes that for him literature began with Dostoevsky and ended with Joyce and Eliot. Joyce was a late acquisition. At the time I knew him he had not read *Ulysses* through; but he had read at it, and enough to gauge its power. He had the shrewd gift of triangulation, marking out his course like a good navigator in terms of his acknowledged landmarks, and gradually he could make room for Joyce. But Miss McCarthy is right, he wouldn't budge much further. Sometimes this conservatism of temperament shut off the magazine from some new currents. The Abstract Expressionists were at this time virtually unknown, de Kooning had not yet had his first one-man show, Clement Greenberg was beating the drums for the painters (particularly Jackson Pollock), and *Partisan Review* might have done much more along these lines, especially since the breakthrough in painting was one of the big achievements of those years. But Philip had some personal animosity toward Greenberg, and besides he wasn't much interested in the plastic arts. He had a similar lack of interest in pop culture. Anatole Broyard had written a piece on "The Hipster," which was then a new phenomenon; I brought it to Philip's attention, it was printed, and Philip liked it in print. But he did not make much use of Broyard thereafter. Broyard represented to him another generation and new things with which he didn't want to cope. His mind was turned backward, rehearsing the sacred canon of the Great Moderns.

The other pole of his conservatism was his Marxism, which we all shared with him in varying degrees. And here, I think, we have to turn the criticism he made so often of others back on himself: that he was "without ideas." But so then were the rest of us, not ideas that mattered anyway, or today in this country we might not be facing the same old stale intellectual line-ups. Political polemic, and there was a lot going on, drew our energies away from doing any real thinking that would have changed the basic fabric of the Marxism we inherited.

Briefly, the political position of the magazine was what it was during the late 30's just at the outbreak of the war, though gradually and then markedly showing less and less deference to the name of Trotsky. The Stalinists and fellow-travelers, who had lain low during the era of the Hitler-Stalin pact, were now out in full force. In the atmosphere of amity toward the Russians as wartime allies it seemed bad manners to mention the slave-labor camps. The magazine was pushed back into its old job of fighting Stalinism, and in the rather sickly-sweet atmosphere when run-of-the-mill editorials in the *Times* preaching benevolent understanding toward Stalin used to make Philip grind his teeth. In this battle Sidney Hook and James Burnham were still allies, though they were already beginning to go off on their separate ways, as the shadow of McCarthyism, at first no bigger than a man's hand, began to loom larger.

Hook and Rahv rubbed each other wrong personally. Philip's authoritative manner, which we accepted as his personal style, wasn't acceptable

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at all to Hook. Besides, Sidney felt frustrated in argument with Rahv, like a teacher who can't get his ideas through to a dull pupil. What Hook didn't understand was that Philip wasn't interested in abstract ideas as such, that they were merely so much wind that passed him by without his caring to hear. "He's an autodidact," Hook grumbled after one such occasion. "What can you expect?" But he did concede that Philip had real political insight—which was no small compliment coming from Hook. Philip, however, had by this time nothing complimentary to say about Hook. This struck me as both ingratitude and forgetfulness on Rahv's part. In the 30's *Partisan Review* and everybody on it leaned on Hook politically. He was the acknowledged master of Marxist theory, and the spearhead in the attack on Stalinism from the Left; and therefore ideologically indispensable to the magazine. A sudden flash of memory from a decade earlier: Dwight Macdonald in his kitchen arguing with some more orthodox Marxist: "Look, there are a hundred and twenty million people in the United States—" (how far back *that* sounds!)—"and Sidney Hook is America's Number One Marxist. That's good enough for me." If Hook's intellectual horizon had contracted since then, one might at least remain mindful of those earlier services. But when Rahv was down on someone, he tended to be ruthless in his judgments. Hook was right, Philip did have a very shrewd political insight; but this insight led him away from the path Hook was following. Anti-Communism as such wasn't enough, was satisfactory neither as political doctrine nor even ultimately as political tactic. But if so, what positive politics could be put in its place? That was the question for which nobody seemed to have any answer.

James Burnham wrote a piece, "Lenin's Heirs," which made a stir at the time. His thesis was that Stalin had not usurped and distorted the Marxist birthright, but that he was in fact the legitimate continuator of attitudes and policies launched by Lenin. Afer *Gulag Archipelago*, that judgment should surprise no one, but at the time it shook a lot of tender sensibilities among Marxist purists. One day we were talking alone and Philip burst out with a cry almost of personal outrage, "Lenin and Trotsky lied like hell." The remark, independent of Burnham's article, came out of his own soul-searching and revisiting of the historical facts. Younger readers can only guess at the explosive force of this change of mind. We had been brought up to believe that Lenin and Trotsky were heroes, *sans peur et sans reproche*, and that Stalin was the arch-villain solely responsible for all the evils wrought in the name of Marxism. It was a kind of devil-theory of history which, by pushing all the evil on to one individual, allowed one to keep one's Marxist faith intact. But if Lenin and Trotsky had been untrustworthy guides, why not push one step further back: how about Marx himself? That was a step Philip couldn't take. Marxism was too much woven into the fabric of his being, it was the framework within which he took in experience, and he could no more have placed this framework in doubt than the true believer can step outside his faith and question it. The two authors he felt closest to, and on whom he wrote best, were Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, both intensely religious men. On a few occasions Delmore and I teased him on this, since he professed to be so anti-religious himself. Usually he just shrugged off the question; but once he declared, and with dead seriousness, that he had settled the religious question for himself when he was nine years old. To which Delmore immediately shot back: "And what other brilliant ideas did you have at the age of nine, Philip?" I know now that underneath it all Philip had his own *pietas*, his own religion.

But as with many people, his religion was a matter more of sentiment than practice. In retrospect, there was something touching about his Marxism; it provided the emotional center for his life, unifying in feeling his early years of poverty, the breadlines of his youth, his skirmishes with the Communist party, and his dissatisfaction with the society around him (which, Philip being Philip, he would have felt for any social system in which he found himself). But in fact he was not a Marxist. This statement may come as a surprise to some people; but you have only to compare Philip's literary essays, in their free play of intelligence and sensibility, with the criticism of Georg Lukacs, which—erudite and copious as it is—must twist every perception to lock it into the total system, in order to judge who is the real Marxist. And do not think that literary criticism is a merely peripheral matter, an unnecessary severity that Marxism might easily dispense with. On the contrary, in its treatment of the human spirit as expressed in art and literature Marxism reveals the will to totality that characterizes it as an ideology. "All or not at all," James Joyce said in another connection; but his words hold in a Marxist context too. There is no such thing as a partial or even part-time Marxist.

Camus came to visit us in the spring of 1946. He was a charming guest, modest, attentive, genuinely interested in what we had to say. As office boy and general factotum I had the job, not at all unpleasant this time, of fetching him from and to his hotel. In the cab back he shook my arm and said that he was distressed by us. This came as a surprise, since the evening had seemed to go so pleasantly. No, he didn't mean that, he had had a very good time, but he was distressed because "You people still call yourselves Marxist, and think of yourselves as Marxists." I couldn't understand what he was getting at. At that time he had not broken with Sartre and had not written *The Rebel*; nor had there been any indication in

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his conversation that night that his thoughts were running that way. His distress seemed to me unnecessary and extreme, a result of the French habit of formulating intellectual theses too neatly and dichotomously. What was wrong with being a liberal or democratic Marxist? Why couldn't one believe in Marxism and freedom both? Now, in retrospect, I think Camus was dead right.

First of all, the devil-theory of Stalin was itself anti-Marxist. How could one man's perverse will turn revolution into despotism if economic causes ruled history? Occasionally Philip would try Trotsky's explanation, later elaborated by Isaac Deutscher: that the revolution had come in a backward country, where goods were scarce, and in the consequent competition for them a new privileged bureaucratic class inevitably arose. But Philip accepted this rationalization only halfheartedly, and elsewhere in his conversation he spoke very differently and more wisely. He had lectured me often enough, God knows, about the dynamics of power. He had looked at the Communist party closely enough to know that the regimentation, suppression, and total organization by which it comes to power has to continue when it is in power. You do not arrive at power and squat passively on it. Power itself, as Nietzsche said, is the discharge of power—toward further power. The power that arrives through total regimentation discharges itself in further regimentation; let be for a moment, and your regime crumbles. Every bureaucracy tends to perpetuate itself, and the more total the bureaucracy the more fiercely it is driven to self-perpetuation. Now that the Khrushchev thaw has long since frozen over, and the permanent revolution of the Chinese has petrified into permanent terror and regimentation, it would be foolish to go on expecting that Marxism and liberty will ever be compatible. Of course, freedom may become a dispensable commodity in the next phase of history. For some parts of the world Marxism may provide the only dynamism able to whip the mass of mankind into some kind of organization to stave off famine. But if we enter that new period let us be under no illusions about the liberal nature of the ideas that lead us into it.

Our kind of Marxism was a luxury; it never had to sully itself by coming to power, and on the other hand it kept the purity of its dissent by being detached from the wicked deeds of American capitalism. If I name Philip Rahv in this connection, it is only because he thought more deeply about politics and I took him as my political mentor. The fault was one of our whole generation. We had inherited the experience of the 30's, and thought we were doing enough simply to pass it on; but we were not radical enough to get to the root of its matter. Intrepid souls like Silone, Orwell, and Koestler had supposedly gone through the archetypal ordeal of "the god that failed," and for us that seemed to close a chapter for Western intellectuals. We were wrong, the god was to rise again; and the cycle of the dying and rising god is bound to be repeated again and again so long as we fail to think through what the nature of this god is. The fact is that the god didn't fail at all, he has been a howling success; he now holds half of the world's population in his grip. It was our deluded expectations that failed. And in this sense we failed the decades that were to come. As the attitude of a liberal Marxism, vague enough to begin with, became even vaguer and more vaporous, it infected the whole of American liberalism; and it was to erupt again as the infantile Marxism of the 60's.

III

I HAVE JUST shown these notes to a friend who was through it all with me. "I don't know," she laughs. "You do make Philip out to be the monster he was. . . ."

She confirms my accuracy, but I'm suddenly appalled at what I may be doing raising old ghosts. The time seems so long ago, the man is dead, and whatever irritations and rancors there may have been turn now to sadness and affection. Besides, I didn't see Philip during the last thirteen years of his life, when time and age may have gentled him a lot. He had then a status and recognition lacking in the earlier years, and he may not have had to elbow his way so vigorously. I can't forget either that the last two times I talked with him alone—some years after I had left *Partisan Review*—were deeply pleasant and moving.

On the first occasion, I ran into him in the club car going to Boston, and what would have been a tedious trip was transformed into a delight. It seemed I hadn't talked to anyone in ages, not like this anyway, where the steps and premises of your argument do not have to be spelled out; and once again I was impressed with the power and insight of his mind. We were both going to a conference at Harvard—on "The Little Magazine," no less!—and there he paid me publicly what he'd never done privately in the years I was a co-editor: a compliment for my past services to the magazine.

The second, and last occasion, was more touching. It was a weekend summer evening in New York, and the city was so quiet that it seemed deserted. We were both at loose ends, and walked around—'way off our usual beat, as I recall, around Gramercy Park and Stuyvesant Place, through very quiet streets. Philip was in a reminiscent mood. He told me he had often thought of writing a novel about the people we knew, and if he did, he would call it *The Truants*. I'm sorry he never got around to writing it; it would have been an unusual book, for in his position a great deal of life had passed before his eyes. The point of his title, he explained, was that in those years we had all been playing truant, escaping for a

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brief while from the harshness of whatever practical reality would finally claim us again. And he began ticking off one by one the people we'd known and their initial hopes, ending always with the refrain, "It wasn't in the cards." But this time he wasn't in one of those black destructive moods I knew so well from the past; reflective and sad, his voice seemed to speak gently out of the vacant summer evening.

Truant? Yes, that fitted me. For a few years I had been free, taking no practical thought of tomorrow, finally to be swallowed up again in the academy. As Philip talked, I remembered another time at the beginning of those years: the fall of 1945 and Delmore and I in Julius's Bar off Sheridan Square. The Village bars used to change clienteles a good deal, but that night the place was filled with a lot of people Delmore knew—people more or less our age and with similar cultural aspirations or entanglements, as the case might be. The joint was jumping, but only with conversation. No juke box, no television. People moved from table to table, to talk with others they knew. Delmore turned to me, his eyes blazing with excitement, shouting "1919!" We thought it was the beginning of another 20's, a period of freedom and glorious creation. To get the feeling of that moment the reader has to remember that we were children of the depression first and afterward hurled into the war. During the first years of the war, after the smashing German victories, the newspapers and *Time* magazine kept dinning at us that this could well be another Thirty Years' War. Thirty years! Whenever I read or heard it, I thought, like so many others of my age, "Well, there goes my life." But now the war had ended, and we were still young, free to be truants for as long as it might take. The whole world seemed to open around us with gorgeous possibilities.

Another 20's? Alas, to use Philip's words, it was not in the cards. The Korean war in 1950 rang down a curtain on the whole period. Even if history hadn't obliged with so neat a finale, the cramping symptoms of the cold war had begun to take over. Later, when the younger men turned up, they were of another breed, with very different backgrounds and very different expectations from life. Where we were truants, they were immediately launched toward a career, caught up in the arduous process, as one of them put it, of "making it." They belonged to a new world that was taking over. But the late 40's, however much charged at times with personal turmoil and desperation, still remain for me a special and unique pocket of time spared from the trampling march of this century's history. If those years did not live up to our initial dreams, they were not nothing.

So, dear Philip, I lay this poor rose on your grave; and if it does have some thorns, never mind, that is the way roses have to be.

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Holy Land

Hillel Halkin

SHORTLY after the end of the October war, my wife, I, and our six-month-old daughter moved into the house we had built on nearly an acre of land in the hilltop village of Z. "What will you do with so much land?" my Israeli friends asked me concernedly, whereas I was worried about how to get along with so little: at the very least I wanted flower beds, a rock garden, a vegetable garden, fruit trees, a chicken run, room for a donkey, and space enough left over to set aside as a nature reserve. I had been land hungry ever since I could remember, which is to say, even as a small city boy whose practical knowledge of the green world beyond New York consisted largely of the ability to recognize, if not consistently to avoid, poison ivy, and it had grieved me to have to sell the one-hundred-fifty acres that I owned in the state of Maine in order to help pay for our acre in Z.—all the more so, because they didn't even cover the full cost of it. Proportionally, it might be argued that I wasn't striking a bad bargain, since by exchanging one-twelve-millionth of the land area of the United States for one-five-millionth of that of Israel I was trading fewer shares for more, but I found such statistics cold comfort. *I* had remained the same size; so had the world; and *it* was less mine than before.

I bought the land in Maine in the summer of 1966, when I borrowed a car from friends and headed northeast, armed with an Esso map of New England, a Strout Realty catalogue, and fifteen hundred dollars, with which I intended to purchase as much territory as it could possibly fetch. I had crossed the Maine line from New Hampshire and gotten as far as Waldo County, midway between Bangor and the state capital of Augusta, when I found what I was looking for: one-hundred-fifty acres of abandoned farmland and woodland, with a small brook flowing through them, selling at ten dollars an acre, a cut rate attributable perhaps to the fact that the county idiot, to whose family the land once belonged, had attempted several times to set fire to it, not without a measure of success. At the time, if I remember correctly what was an essentially confused period of my life, I wanted to build a log cabin and live in it as a hermit, an end to which the property was admirably suited, being located half a mile in from the nearest paved road and many times that distance from the nearest cluster of houses that cared to call itself a town. Several months later, however, I married instead, and was forced to cancel my plans. Nevertheless, as a concession to the frustrated solitary in me, my wife agreed to spend the following summer camping out on the land in a tent. This arrangement left much to be desired as a belated honeymoon, but I did like the feeling of getting up every morning and going off to roam in my woods. One could dedicate a lifetime, I thought —I *would* dedicate part of mine—to getting to know every tree, rock, and bog of this acreage with no less profit than to exploring the museums of Europe or the libraries of the world. One day, I recall, I chased a fox through the broad meadow on which we had pitched our tent, following at top speed the brown appearances of his tail in the high grass. I had no illusions about catching him, and before long he was lost to sight, but I didn't stop running until, exuberant and out of breath, I had reached my property line. It wasn't the fox I'd been chasing—it was the physical sensation of what was mine.

There are no foxes on our present acre in Israel (though I did spot a mongoose slinking across it not long ago), and while our hilltop location allows us to see for tens of miles over the better part of the compass dial, one can practically throw a stone from our house to any of our borders. Still, while I've done precious little gardening to date, it's already quite clear that my work is cut out for me. One can spend as many years on a few yards of earth as in a square mile of woods—the expenditure of energy is ultimately the same, though not the way it is expended. If there is a difference in their demands on one, it is that the woods can take care of themselves, while the garden needs constant attending, for it represents a stage in man's interference with nature from which there is no easy return. Bring in some topsoil for better growth, and you had better plant on it fast, or the winter rains will wash it

HILLEL HALKIN is a writer and translator who is currently settled in Israel; he has contributed several articles on Israel and Zionism to COMMENTARY, among them "Americans in Israel" (May 1972) and "Building Jerusalem" (September 1971).

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away, cut gullies in the old soil beneath it, and leave you worse off than before. Inherit half a dozen trees which bore oranges the size of grapefruits when you first saw them, and suddenly they are bearing fruit the size of cherries, because you have neglected to prune them properly. Let the wildflowers grow high in the back, where you had thought to leave the ground fallow, and you'll have snakes when the dry weather starts, one of which, *vipera xanthina*, the Palestinian viper, you wouldn't want to get bitten by. Indeed, several townsmen have already warned me that it's time I took a sickle to our land, though the fact of the matter is that the flowers are so pretty that I haven't been able to bring myself to cut them.

I haven't seen a viper on our property, but I did once find the skin of one, discarded under a bush on a hot, dusty day. We have other tenants, too, of whom I so far know only by inference, such as the porcupine who leaves his gray-white quill by our house as a calling card, or the underground burrower, a hedgehog perhaps or a mole-rat, who periodically puts out a pile of fresh dirt by the entrance to his tunnel, presumably for the dustman to collect. I *have* seen snails, spiders, scorpions, earthworms, tortoises, ants, mosquitoes, butterflies, field mice, and over a dozen species of birds, including two brilliantly blue-winged kingfishers who are currently nesting in the earthen embankment at the lower end of our property, in an abandoned condominium of holes that formerly belonged to some geckos. These lizards are curious beasts, who like nothing better than to run up and down the walls of human dwellings on their suction-padded feet; the rough stucco of ours is perfect terrain for them, and I suspect that they moved to new quarters in order to be closer to it. Equally strange are the tortoises. Once I came upon two of them copulating behind a stone, the male precariously atilt the female, who kept cautiously advancing beneath him as though determined to be about her business, their shells clicking and clacking like billiard balls. I modestly averted my gaze for a moment to regard something else, and when I turned back they were gone—into thin air, it must be, for it's common knowledge that a tortoise can't run.

To a tortoise, no doubt, our acre *is* a woods, big enough to roam in all he pleases. One might learn something from him about living within cramped borders. Below us, downhill, is an unpaved town road, beyond which stretches a vista of olive groves, vineyards, the gentle hills of the Carmel, and the distant lights of Haifa at night, all occasionally disfigured by a carelessly smoking limeworks located behind the first ridge. Across an empty lot to our left is a country cottage inhabited by the Schubs, a middle-aged, vegetarian, Scotch-drinking couple, both artists by trade. They are splendid artists, splendid gardeners, splendid people; beneath their British exterior, which is somewhat proper and colonial, they are as daft as a pair of mad monks. Uphill from us, in a house that fronts on one of the town's main streets, lives toothless old Yerachmiel Mizrachi. Yerachmiel and the house have been sold to a couple from Haifa, but Yerachmiel hasn't been told so as to spare him the distress. The house was owned by his younger brother, who sold it on the condition that Yerachmiel remain in it for as long as he lives: it is a kind of insurance policy in reverse, whereby the family gets paid in the insured man's lifetime and the company wins by his death. The couple from Haifa occasionally come to inspect their property and let their children, who are meanwhile growing up, romp on their future lawn; as Yerachmiel Mizrachi is stone deaf, he does not hear the children or come to the window to look out, thus raising false hopes in the visitors.

The land on our right belongs to Mr. Zehavi, who cut down the plum trees.

Zehavi is the man who sold us our property, keeping an adjacent strip of land that he also owned for himself. Both plots, he informed us, had been in his family since the year Z. was founded, when his grandparents bought them from the Arabs (Z. is one of the oldest Zionist settlements in Palestine, and will soon be celebrating its centenary); it was only because he was hard-pressed for money that he was selling one of them now. Zehavi was unpopular in town, where he had a reputation for being a miser. "He's a crafty old peasant," we were warned by the Schubs, "you'd better watch out for him." We did; yet we had no cause for complaint about his keeping his share of the contract. When we had the land surveyed, however, we discovered that the border between us ran directly through the trunks of two plum trees, which had already won my admiration by their profusion of blossoms and their promise of sumptuous fruit. Since Zehavi lived in a house in town some distance away, I suggested that in return for a reasonable sum he might agree to move the border at that point a foot to his side so that the trees might be all on ours.

I was unprepared for the vehemence of his response. The trees, he declared, had been planted by his father when he himself was a child; he had watered and tended them since; and he could not possibly part with them now. Instead, he proposed, *he* would pay me, and we would move the border the other way.

This time it was I who refused. I had no intention of surrendering my claim. If the plum trees couldn't be all mine, I would at least keep my half. Let the border run where it was, right through the middle of them.

And there the matter rested—or at least I thought it did, until returning a week later to the property I experienced the curious sensation of looking at a picture from which something familiar—but what?—is missing. The plum trees! I ran with a sinking stomach to where they had stood: all that was left of them were two pathetic stumps

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that barely came up to my knees. They had been mangled with an axe, not even cut cleanly, their still green branches scattered about like clothing after an orgy, hacked and splintered to pieces with a maniacal fury. Zehavi! Despite the fact that he was no longer young, and hardly seemed capable of committing so passionate a crime, it couldn't have been anyone else. I ran to his house—he was out. That evening I got him on the phone.

"Zehavi!" I shouted into the receiver. "How could you have done it?"

"Halkin?"

"Zehavi!"

"Halkin! I had to do it. You made me." His voice was touchy, aggrieved, as though he were the injured party. "You gave me no choice. They were my trees. I helped my father plant them. I watered them as a boy. I offered to pay you for them."

"For God's sake," I said. It was as though the true mother in the biblical story about Solomon had torn her baby into shreds with her own hands and accused the false mother of murder. "I would have let you have them if I knew you would chop them down. Why didn't you tell me first?"

"It wouldn't have made any difference, Halkin. I had to do it. I wanted us to be good neighbors."

"You wanted us to be *what*?"

"Good neighbors. It would never have worked half and half. Believe me, I'm a farmer. I know about land. Sooner or later we'd have quarreled. I did it for your sake."

AND PERHAPS he did, though if so his intentions misfired, since the two of us avoid each other now when we meet in the street and look the other way. No doubt it irked him beyond endurance to have to share his plums with me, whose grandfather was a *melamed* in Nayebichov when his was dirtying his fingers in the soil of the Land. Not long after this incident, however, I was pleased to discover that our property had a more ancient Jewish patrimony than that of Mr. Zehavi's grandfather. Poking around one day in an overgrown area toward the bottom of our acre, I suddenly lost my footing and fell several feet through the tangled branches of a wild pistachio tree to land on my knees in a hidden depression that sloped counter to the grade of the hill. Directly in front of me was a small opening leading into what seemed to be a cave, the limestone ledge above which had been crudely but unmistakably worked to form a rough lintel. After clearing away some of the dirt at the entrance, I was able to crawl inside. A subterranean must filled the space I was in, a rectangular chamber that measured some ten feet by fifteen, and had barely enough clearance at the center to enable me to stand straight. Where the ceiling sloped down to meet the three walls—the fourth was taken up by the entranceway—a number of niches had been cut: two in the shorter rear wall, three in each of the side ones. Black beetles scurried fretfully at my feet, roused by my sudden intrusion from their graveyard vigil, for it was perfectly clear that I was in a burial cave.

But whose? The country is full of such caves, Christian, Roman, Hellenistic, Jewish, Canaanite, prehistoric, antediluvian. An archaeologist could have told me at one glance; as it turned out, however, a Talmudist told me at none. Without waiting for me to finish my description, he pulled a volume off his shelf, opened to the sixth chapter of the Mishnah of *Bava Batra*, and read aloud:

> He who sells a burial place to another, or who comes to possess one, shall make the interior of the cave four *amoth* by six, and shall hollow out eight niches, three on one side, three on the other, and two on the remaining one. . . . Rabbi Shim'on ben Gamliel says, one goes according to the rock.

The cave was a Jewish one, then, of that there was no doubt; and since a Jewish family was unlikely to have lived and buried its dead in so isolated an area of the Carmel before the Hasmonean expansion of the second and first centuries B.C.E., or much after the Moslem conquest, by which time burial customs had probably in any case changed, it was possible to date it to a period ranging roughly from fifteen hundred to two thousand years ago.

I nursed no dreams of buried treasure, since to judge by the cave's crudeness its owners were not well-to-do; besides which, it had clearly been ransacked by graverobbers, and in all likelihood by the department of antiquities too, as was evidenced by the fact that several of its niches were exposed completely, the surface earth having been dug away to the underlying rock, and the others very nearly so. Nevertheless, I descended to it one day with several companions, equipped with a lantern and spades, to see what we could unearth. The results were unremarkable: little fragments of red pottery, the bones of a sheep or goat that had probably been roasted by shepherds, an ostracon of a phonograph record with the partial inscription UMBA TUMBA on the obverse side and the letters RAEL on the reverse. "Middle Ben-Gurion dynasty," grumbled the companion who found it and went on digging. It was he who later came up with the one real discovery of the day: half of a human jawbone, yellowed like old parchment but otherwise in good condition, with two of its rear molars still intact in their sockets. The rest of its body, like those of its fellow cavemates, had vanished, leaving only it behind like the grin of the Cheshire cat. It was, it seemed safe to assume, the last surviving member of a member of the family whose property we owned.

I TOOK the jawbone home and put it in the drawer of my desk, from which I occasionally removed it for a silent *tête-à-tête*. I wondered about it. Had its master lived on our

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property, or had the cave simply been purchased by him or his family as the Mishnah suggests, the way one nowadays buys a plot in a cemetery that may be far from one's home? Indeed, we have a record of such a transaction in the Book of Genesis:

> And Sarah died in Kiriatharba—the same is Hebron—in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. And Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spoke unto the children of Heth, saying: "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." . . . Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the children of Heth. . . . And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him: "My Lord, hearken unto me: a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.". . . And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the hearing of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. So the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the border thereof round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth. . . . And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre—the same is Hebron—in the land of Canaan.

In either case, the owner of the jawbone was familiar with our land; what of it might he recognize today? Not the red-tiled roofs on the hilltop, or the smoke from the limeworks, or the foundation of our own house that was being churned out by the cement mixer; but the wild almonds and figs, the wild olives and pomegranates, the wild mustard and garlic that shoot up every spring in such a reckless green rush, as though aware that life were but a brief season—"all the trees that were in the field"—these he would surely remember. He? But perhaps it wasn't a man's jaw at all, for it was so petite that when I tried fitting it around my own it was several sizes too small and came barely halfway to my ear. Had it belonged to a woman, then? A small child? This question was unexpectedly answered one evening soon after while dining out at the house of some friends. Midway through the soup the conversation I was conducting with the guest seated opposite me revealed that he was a dentist. Could he tell me, I wanted to know, leaning forward abruptly, something about a jaw? He imagined he could. The apartment in which we were living at the time was not far away; I was there and back again with the jaw before the main course was served. There was a hush at the table while I handed it to the dentist. He examined it by candlelight, turning it this way and that like a new bridge prepared for a fitting, before passing judgment. "She was a middle-aged woman, I'd say. About forty years old. The molars are ground flat; they must have chewed a lot of bread. No cavities, though. I can't tell you much more. Oh, yes: she had gum trouble. Here, you can see these irregularities in the alveolar ridge." And indeed, a close look disclosed a definite sag in the set of the bone where it had met the membrane around it.

SINCE the discovery of the cave our property has seemed larger to me than before, in an Einsteinian if not a Euclidean sense, for surely the sum of an acre times fifteen-hundred years must come close to equalling that of one-hundred-fifty acres times nearly yesterday. How many of these years, I wondered, was the cave used for burial, and how many more thereafter did it continue to be known and watched over by the descendants of those lying within it before being finally abandoned by them to the shepherds and the graverobbers? The dead may bind us to places even more than the living, whom we can at least correspond with if we can't take them with us. I once knew of a widow in New York who refused to go away on vacation because she did not want to leave her husband alone in the cemetery, and even Abraham, though his son Isaac was a *sabra*, calls himself "a stranger and a sojourner" in the Land until he has buried Sarah in it. The pious Jews, too, I suspect, who came to the Land of Israel to die and be buried in it over the centuries, did so in part so that their mortal remains would not embog their children any deeper in the slime of Exile than they already were, as was the case with the Israelites in Egypt, who were unable to depart, the Midrash informs us, before they had raised the bones of the patriarch Joseph from the bottom of the Nile. Here, however, another practical consideration was at work too, for it was well known that on Judgment Day those who were already buried in the Land would be spared the ordeal of *gilgul mechilot*, "the migration of the caverns," whereby the bones of the Jewish dead would make their arduous passage underground from the four corners of the earth to be resurrected in Israel, groping and tumbling for days on end through the dark bowels of the world. As a young boy who imagined this subterranean crush in all its claustrophobic detail, I asked myself whether it wouldn't have been advisable of God to have resurrected the dead where they were and allowed them to reach their destination by more conventional means. Doubtless, however, He had His reasons, chief among them perhaps being that even He was powerless to work such a miracle on other than His own chosen soil. Wasn't this what the Holy Land was all about?

There is nothing overtly holy about the soil of our acre, a yellowish-brown loam of stubborn though not intractable character, beneath which the limestone bedrock juts closer to the surface at times than a gardener might wish. Yet a pickaxe can crumble it easily enough, whereupon it breaks into numerous pebbles of a chalk so pure

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one could write with them on a blackboard. When rolled hard between the fingers, they become a white powder; when licked, they taste somewhat sweet, though not to the point that they might tempt one to bite into them more deeply. They are best savored perhaps with a brush of the lips, a kind of pilgrim's kiss . . . a mode of contact with the earth, if one may digress for a moment, that is not much in fashion these days, whether because tourism has replaced pilgrimage as an attitude of travel, or because the concrete seas by which the modern traveler is surrounded upon arrival are in any case unconducive to the custom. And yet to the true pilgrim this difficulty is more apparent than real, as I had occasion to witness several years ago when arriving in Israel on a Greek ship from Venice that had anchored in Limassol to pick up a consignment of Cypriot Christians on their way to spend Easter week in Jerusalem. These gnarled little men and women in black, so short and stumpy of stature that they seemed to belong to another, pygmified race, passed the night on deck eating and praying beneath the stars and were in a state of rare spirits when we docked in Haifa Bay the next morning. For a while they were content to stand excitedly on deck and point their fingers toward shore; but growing more and more impatient as the disembarkation proceedings dragged on, they soon flung themselves on the deck of the ship and began kissing it, as though the same wooden planks that had creaked crankily beneath them all through the night had been magically transformed into sacred ground by mere virtue of their proximity to Palestinian soil. The rest of the passengers, mostly chartered vacationers on a Middle Eastern tour, looked on with discomfort at this display of faith's powers, regaining their composure only when, as though on a signal from their guide, they began all at once to pull out their cameras and record their perspective on the event.

Already at the start of their trip, in effect, both the vacationers and the Cypriots were getting what they had paid for. The tourist travels to see something different, the pilgrim to see differently—and for this the deck of a ship is as good a place as any to begin. Jewish sources, particularly Hasidic ones, abound in this perception of what ascending to the Holy Land involves. If the Baal Shem Tov, as is known, put off his pilgrimage there time and again and died without ever having made it, this was not, we may be sure, because he questioned the Land's special holiness, but because he doubted his ability to perceive it; while that most enigmatic of all *tsaddikim*, the riddlesome Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, was ready to depart from the Land the day after his arrival, for he had, so he told his traveling companion, seen all there was to see. What Rabbi Nachman did in the course of that day is unknown, though it may have been no more than kiss a single clod of dirt.

For of course all land is holy to the eyes that know how to look, being that from which we come, and to which we must return, and which alone can sustain us in the interim—which makes it paradoxical of the Jews, it would seem, to have always insisted that their land was holier than others. As far back as antiquity, such implausible, if not self-serving, hierarchies of holiness, the bread and butter of Judaism, infuriated the Gentiles, who naturally resented such insolent absurdities as the claim that God loved all His creatures but loved the Jews more, or that He valued the seventh day of His week above the preceding six. Christianity, though not without some backsliding, subsequently took up the banner; and there was a time of my life in which it seemed to me not only the more rigorously logical, but also the more humanly profound, of the two religions. Everything is holy! I cried out with Blake, with that youthful passion for equality that is as determined to level differences in the realm of ontology as in that of authority or economics. If infinity could be found in a grain of sand, why not everywhere else? As I have grown older, I have become less of a spiritual sans-culotte in this respect, having come to the regrettable conclusion that it is but a short and oft-taken step from believing that everything is holy to living as though nothing were, the totality being a slippery category to embrace, but I still do not believe my woods in Maine to be a whit further from divinity than our hilltop in Z. simply because the weeds it produces aren't mentioned in the Bible. Both smell equally good after a rain; and the mosquitoes in summer are surely as annoying on either.

Not *the* holy land then, just one of many; and I hope it will not seem excessively xenophobic on my part if I confess to the occasional wish as a Jew that the rest of the world would take its shrines elsewhere, to equally suitable grounds, and leave us here by ourselves to putter around with the bones of our dead. Not that I think it likely that we can do a better job than others with this particular patch of the globe; on the contrary, I am reasonably convinced that we will make a mess of it in the end, thereby proving no exception to the proverbial rule that familiarity, that dulling condition of the spirit from which tourists and pilgrims are in flight, breeds contempt. We Jews returned to Palestine in order to get back to the land, but now seem more interested *in* what we can get out of it. Those limeworks over there, for example, smoking up the vineyards when the wind blows the wrong way, blotting out the fields where Elijah smote the priests of the Baal, disemboweling the hidden part of the hill until one day there will be nothing left but a paper-thin carapace, as brittle as an empty snail shell: are they not a profanation? To be sure, there must be lime, which is an ingredient in our own house, but I refuse to concede that it needs to be gotten by spoiling my air and my

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view. The great white storks who fly overhead every autumn on their way to changing hemispheres, and make the return trip again in the spring, must look down and wonder what benighted species of gardener would put such a stinking gray hole in the middle of his greenery. I could tell them about Zehavi and the plum trees.

So we are back to gardens again, this time to the kind that grow metaphors. They are already to be found in the Bible. "And He shall make her wasteland an Eden and her wilderness a garden of God," prophesied Isaiah, who was not, unlike some contemporary social critics, partial to wilderness. In part, no doubt, this prejudice stems from the peculiarities of the Palestinian landscape, in which untamed nature means not the cool and verdant forests of the north with their brooks, fish, and berries on which the woodsman can survive for many months, but a harsh and ungenerous environment, if not desert then a thistly *maquis*, difficult to walk in, exposed to fierce wind and rain for half of the year, and to even fiercer sun for the other, and almost totally lacking in fresh or potable water, a commodity that was already in short supply in Neolithic times. Equally, however, Isaiah was speaking in the name of a biblical tradition to which he subscribed, and which held that it was impracticable to keep men out of nature's hair. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it," says God in His maiden speech to mankind, one which has been recently interpreted in some circles as an incitement to population explosion, and in others as a call for mass zoocide, though I submit that in fact it is neither. It is simply a plea for good gardening.

For what is the ideal garden? It is a state of interdependence between nature and man, a sort of Hobbesian contract, as it were, by which the one agrees to be pliant and domestic, and the other to be benevolent, responsible, and just. It is not a forest or jungle in which nature is allowed to run free; but neither is it a farm on which nature is enslaved, exploited for what it is worth, and abandoned or obliterated in the end if it fails to pay its way. It may be used to raise food, and so be planned for utility; but variety is no less its goal, and it must have flowers, and shrubs, and trees that bear only green leaves, and places to walk in and play, and wild areas here and there that blend into the cultivated ones, corners of self-expression, as it were, in which nature is left to improvise on its own or give refuge to an escapee from the hoe. Since it is not, strictly speaking, an economic enterprise, it cannot be judged in strictly economic terms; yet it must not be wasteful either, whether in money or in time, and should strive to be self-sufficient, using the resources that are most available and closest to hand. In size it may vary from a backyard to a country; if it encounters an obstacle, like an anthill, limeworks, or city, it needn't or may be unable to eliminate it, but neither can it just go around it, and it must incorporate it into its structure as artfully as it can. For above all, a garden is an art, and must concentrate on the relations of things as much as on the things themselves, being always mindful of the whole in dealing with each of the parts.

To the wilderness lover all this is tame stuff indeed, about as exciting as a pet lamb to a hunter. And yet with every year it is becoming apparent that if the wilderness and its contents are to survive at all in our world, they will do so only as part of a larger system of gardens to which they belong. (Such is already the case, for instance, with the great national parks of East Africa, where the elephants and lions have to be watched as carefully as cabbages that are cropped or manured as the occasion demands.) We *have* multiplied and filled the earth, quite without the help of the Bible—and there will be hell to pay if we do not now fruitfully subdue it. The real choice facing mankind is not the wilderness or the garden; it is the garden or the garbage dump, Isaiah or the rusty tin can. We of the affluent world have already embarked upon a revolution of falling expectations whose end is nowhere in sight. If we were presently to divide up the habitable globe among all its inhabitants, even an acre apiece is probably more than could go around; one-hundred-fifty is a dizzy extravagance, and while I could probably have lived on them had I wished with no worse harassment than snowmobiles and climbing taxes, my children, or theirs, would in all likelihood have seen them expropriated by the state to be broken into smaller holdings, much as is done today to the nabobs of India and Iran. I did well, then, to sell them—though to be strictly honest with myself, something in me wishes that I hadn't. I never did get to know a woods very well the summer we tented in Maine, and it is useless to pretend now that I ever shall. In my more elegiac moments of mourning for a freedom I never really had, I regret that I did not build my cabin there after all, so that I might be chasing foxes today, a vanishing breed in pursuit of a vanishing breed, instead of planting geraniums. Which isn't to say that the latter is an open book. The first batch we put in was on a slope, and because I didn't make the proper potholes around them, being lazy and wanting to save work, the water flowed right by them when it rained, so that several of them withered and died on the stem before I knew what was happening. One learns. The important thing is to keep your two feet on the ground.

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The Fear of Affluence

John P. Sisk

IN THIS time of shortage there is, God knows, no shortage of prophets of doom. It is a relief, therefore, when someone like James Reston, with the weight of the *Times* behind him, can look the grim situation squarely in the face and still see the bright side of it, as he did in one of his columns last November. The word from the bright side is that the real menace all along has been prosperity. "The craziest notion that has hit this country in a long while," he wrote, "is that shortages of gas, beef, and a lot of other things are bad for the American people." It's about time we learned that our resources are finite and our power limited, he went on. We will be better off as a nation and as individuals if we cool off, go slower, and stay home more. The worst thing that could happen to us now "is that the Arabs may agree to sell us their oil at higher prices, and encourage us to go on with our foolishness."

I suspect that quite a few people, not all of them selfish sybarites, would disagree with Reston —economists like Milton Friedman and Henry C. Wallich, for example. Nevertheless, he is very much in the American grain as he expresses the fear that affluence is a constant threat to that most important of our resources, the American character. It is not simply that we still expect the American character to protect us in adversity; we remain children enough of our own past to suspect that the adversity is itself the only true school of character, a school that will close its doors forever if we become what Carl Sandburg once referred to contemptuously as a fat-dripping society. This is why in times such as these the Amish get such a favorable press with their Spartan self-sufficiency, as if they were mirror images of the Spartans we might still be had we not been deposited in a land so flowing with milk and honey that, as Thomas Morton wrote in his *New English Canaan,* "I did not thinke that in all the knowne world it could be parallel'd."

Morton has a leading role in what subsequently turns out to be the dress rehearsal of a melodrama that has never gotten off the American stage. His antagonist is William Bradford, governor of the Pilgrim's Plymouth plantation. Depending on how one feels about impulse-release and the commitment to process and experience, Morton is either a liberation hero, perhaps tragically premature in his efforts to release the human spirit from Old World shackles, or an irresponsible dissipator of scarce resources in a circumstance of adversity and even crisis. To Bradford he was the latter—indeed, he was the chief corrupter of the band of dissolute swingers who set up the famous Maypole and "fell to great licentiousness . . . drinking and dancing about it many days together, inviting the Indian women for their consorts, dancing and frisking together like so many fairies, or furies, rather."

Sober John Endicott, as we know, put an end to this scandalous revel. In Hawthorne's version of the encounter, "The Maypole of Merry Mount," Endicott is "the Puritan of Puritans" who arrives with his band in the midst of the prenuptial revels in honor of the young, long-haired, flower-bedecked Lord and Lady of the May. He hacks down the Maypole, whips the profane celebrants, sets some in stocks, strips the young couple of their glittering ritual clothing, and sees to it that the bridegroom's long glossy curls are cropped "in the true, pumpkin-shell fashion." So much for the prototypical Woodstock. "It was a deed of prophecy," says Hawthorne, who never spoke more prophetically. But he is as usual ambiguous: certain enough that the descent from the dream world to reality is inevitable and irreversible but probably not quite so sure as James Reston might be that it is a change for the better.

Bradford and Endicott seem to have been themselves reasonably interested in getting ahead in the New World, but they could not imagine success outside a context of Puritan struggle, nor would the environment let them. To them Morton and his profligate crew were spendthrifts who having forgotten the lessons of the past were losing control of the present and, after the fashion of affluent people, dangerously speeding up time. Bradford and Endicott were men of character, and the function of character is to structure time and keep it manageable. The structuring, of course, has the effect of intensifying the conditions of adversity in which character is schooled, and

JOHN P. SISK teaches English at Gonzaga University in Spokane. Mr. Sisk's articles in COMMENTARY include "War Fictions" (August 1973), "The Curious Analyzer" (May 1973), and "On Intoxication" (February 1972).

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one consequence may very well be the increased capacity to concentrate available energies on the exploitation of resources that will in time result in fat-making and character-weakening affluence. Something like this did in fact happen; Morton and his crew were to return as if from a flamboyant recycling in the pressure cooker of the national subconscious.

The fear of affluence is at bottom a fear of overdependence, a fear that, given the extent to which environment is adversity, affluence like passion means loss of control. Thus we give reverence to and take great comfort from those heroes of adversity who nourish their ecstasies with bread and water in desert caves, dwell with holy indifference in monastic cells, atop pillars or beneath trees, wear hair shirts, sleep on beds of nails, and digest hard iron. So in our money-oriented culture the hero of adversity must, like Huckleberry Finn, demonstrate in his own life that money is bondage. "Absolutely speaking," says Thoreau, who rarely speaks any other way, "the more money, the less virtue." He built his Walden cabin out of used nails and lumber and lived in it "sturdily and Spartanlike," never forgetting his grand function as model as he "put to rout all that was not life." He scorned the rush to California for fool's gold, and scorned those media of affluence, the press, the telegraph, the cable, and the railroad. To him even more than to Reston (see his cranky bachelor's advice to Irishman John Field in *Walden*) our current shortages would be occasions for spiritual liberation. The Amish had nothing to tell him.

THOREAU might appear to be the supreme example of what American success writers later called "true success" to distinguish it from the purely worldly success that results in affluence. As defined by B. C. Forbes, true success "is finding, or making that position which enables you to contribute to the world the very greatest service of which you are capable, through the diligent, persevering, resolute cultivation of all the faculties God has endowed you with, and doing it all with cheerfulness, scorning to allow difficulties or defeats to drive you to pessimism or despair." Emerson could have agreed with this (indeed, he had already said much the same thing in his essay "Success") and so could Andrew Carnegie, who liked to quote Emerson. The celebration of true success in an America that was becoming progressively more successful and affluent was often enough hypocritical lip-service; but as Richard M. Huber emphasizes in *The American Way of Success*, it is a mistake to write it off simply as that. It has its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition and the conviction in that tradition that adversity is the inescapable and defining condition of man and that affluence is more likely than not to prove a snare and a delusion. The affluent Andrew Carnegie was more Deist than Protestant, but he had been brought up in this tradition, and therefore he says in his famous "The Road to Business Success: A Talk to Young Men": "As an end, the acquisition of wealth is ignoble in the extreme; I assume that you save and long for wealth only as a means of enabling you the better to do some good in your day and generation."

Carnegie may have assumed in his audience considerably more altruism than was actually there; nevertheless, one can hear in his talk a characteristic form that the fear of affluence takes: the fear that the ideal of service will get detached from success-seeking so that nothing is left but a mean acquisitiveness. Hence the attraction of Bruce Barton's 1926 best-seller, *The Man Nobody Knows*, with its bracing thesis that a passionate concern to be of service is the surest road to affluence. In Carnegie's view, the longing for wealth unbuffered by a desire to serve all too easily results in the vice of speculation. The speculator rejects the discipline of the true man of business, who "knows that only by patient, unremitting attention to affairs can he earn his reward." Therefore he loses control of time just as, from Bradford's point of view, Morton's ungodly crew did. Speculation follows the conviction that affluence can come quickly and be entirely satisfactory, as if one had been chosen by a grace-dispensing agency to be a god. To Carnegie (who apparently had forgotten how successfully he had himself speculated) this was not only heresy, as it was also to Horatio Alger, but a bad story as well. Orthodox success, which is a good story, begins at the bottom of the ladder sweeping the floor, is slow but sure, and is the crowning achievement of character toughened in the school of adversity. A young man who passes through this ordeal will quite likely become affluent (providing he does not opt along the line for true success), but unless his affluence is ordered to his need to serve he will be corrupted; and if he passes his affluence on to his sons (which Carnegie along with many of the success writers was against), the likely thing is that they will be "unable to resist the temptations to which wealth subjects them, and sink to unworthy lives."

Unfortunately, in this romance of adversity the victims are not only the sons of affluence but all whose natural habitat is that poverty deemed to be so crucial to the character ethic. In part, the poor remain poor not simply because of our need of them to define affluence but because of our fear of affluence (and we could not fear it if the poor did not help us define it). Of course, it makes a difference to us whether the poor are deserving or undeserving. The undeserving poor are the feckless dropouts from the school of adversity, and the traditional temptation has been to say that their poverty is of no value to them and of no moral concern to us. The deserving poor, on the other hand, are orderly, clean, integrated, un-

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complaining, and not envious of their betters. They demonstrate, as does Thoreau, what the rest of us need to believe: that adversity can be not only endurable but enriching. They are unaffected by the Dow-Jones average and the whimsies of Arabian oil sheiks. If they do not stand fast we will have nowhere to go when affluence lets us down. Their poverty is part of the moral economy of the country.

II

It is tempting to consider the counter-culture as a continuation of the true-success tradition and its implied rejection of materialistic establishment values, and as being therefore a positive response to the fear of affluence. The trouble with this view is that true success was establishment-sponsored, not simply permitted, out of a very real fear of the consequences of American immoderation. This is why Thoreau is not as close to the true-success tradition as he appears to be: he was not sufficiently respectful of the establishment and he was himself too immoderate, particularly in his aspiration to be an imperial consciousness. True success was itself part of the character ethic, and though in writers like Bruce Barton and Dale Carnegie it could be made to serve the drive for affluence, its tendency was to counter that drive, to be non-speculative, impulse-inhibiting, and resource- and energy-conserving. This is why Huber is able to say that "For all its terrible pressure to succeed, the character ethic had always been filled with a sense of Christian mercy." The poet Gary Snyder has said of Neal Cassady, the mortal material out of which Jack Kerouac fashioned the mythical Dean Moriarty of *On the Road*, that he "was like so many Americans who had inherited the taste for the limitless, for no limits, which was a unique American experience. You can get hooked on that if you don't know how to translate it into other regions, since when the sheer physical space disappears you go crazy." The advocates of true success were afraid, really, that the American's taste for the limitless might drive him crazy.

Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, according to Snyder, saw Cassady as "the energy of the archetypal West, the energy of the frontier" when there was no longer a frontier so that "space became translated into speed." One might object that the American taste for the limitless takes many more forms than speed, but in one way or another speed is always a factor. The taste for the limitless is a spendthrift taste that aspires to affluence defined as a superabundance of the means believed necessary to the most satisfactory life possible as quickly as possible. It implies, therefore, a quarrel with time. People who wish to feel affluent need to consume time extravagantly, and the extravagant consumption of time is speed. It takes money to go fast, as even in the teeth of the energy crisis the jet set continues to demonstrate, but unless you go fast (and far) it is hard to prove to yourself that you have an affluent command of energy and resources. The alternative is to stay home and be able to command that the means necessary to the experience of affluence be speeded to you. In America, of course, such sedentary affluence never seems quite real.

In a recent issue of *Rolling Stone* Tom Wolfe has stated that such unity as the counter-culture had was largely a matter of fashion, specifically "funky chic." Nevertheless, it had, and to a degree still has, a reputation for opposing the materialistic values that make possible such conspicuous consumers of resources as the jet set. The difficulty with this view (apart from the basic difficulty of the counter-culture's symbiotic dependence on the social and economic order it has thought of itself as countering) is that it has allowed itself to be maneuvered into an over-countering position: everything connected with the repressive, materialistic, conformist establishment is bad, is life-denying, and has to go. This has meant that the impulse-inhibiting, adversity-courting, time-structuring character-and-work ethic (without which the jet set would be traveling by horse and buggy) has had to go also. And with it has gone, unavoidably, the protective fear of affluence.

This is not, of course, the way it has looked from a counter-culture point of view, or from the point of view of that considerable part of the system that has always been a fifth column for the counter-culture. The counter-culture has been able to dispense with the fear of affluence because it has defined itself as uninterested in affluence, if not dead set against it. But insofar as affluence is a superabundance of the energies and resources necessary to live as one would like to live, the counter-culture has pursued affluence as vigorously as did Matthew Josephson's Robber Barons. Its taste for the limitless has expressed itself as an optimistic commitment to change, process, impulse, and the protean possibilities of the self. Its heroes have been intrepid consumers of experience for followers who have all along believed as ardently as many of their middle-class elders that the good life demands a lavish consumption of means in a universe so speeded up that it is possible to think of oneself as being, like Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby or Melville's Ahab, dispensed from historical time, or as having gotten out of time altogether.

Speed, a form of intoxication, is an effort to escape history, to achieve the ultimate liberation. A speeded-up life consumes energy prodigally; to de-accelerate—this is Reston's hope—is to conserve. The motto of speedy people, whether in the counter-culture or the establishment is: To live a little you have to waste a lot. Or as John Cage put it four years ago, when it was easier to put it this way: "Choose abundance rather than scarcity. Be wasteful rather than pinchpenny." Morton's crew

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was too speedy for Bradford's pinchpenny crew; it wanted to get rich quick, the very thing Carnegie warned his young men against. As Sonya Rudikoff has pointed out ("O Pioneers!," COMMENTARY, July 1972), most of the young people who were caught up in the commune movement in the late 60's wanted quick success (what other kind would they dream of in a world where the most compelling models were forms of intoxication?), but only those who were able to put into practice the energy-conserving and adversity-oriented virtues of the character-ethic had a chance to survive. The rest danced around the Maypole for their brief summer's day.

Meanwhile, their parents were being persuaded by visions of quick salvation offered by the various forms of the Human Potential Movement to spend their energies and resources just as lavishly, out of a conviction, no doubt, that salvation like all other good things assumes a magnanimous outlay. Esalen is not only spendthrift (especially when seen against pinchpenny hopes for mere survival rations of wheat, beef, and oil in the deprived areas of the world), but highly speculative in its commitment not to "some known, fixed, timeless goal," as the psychologist Carl R. Rogers puts it, but to a process in which the speculator may become his "deepest, truest self" and changingness is "a primary element in individual living."

What is implied here is a mandate for a speedy exploitation of the limitless resources of the human person. Implied too, as with so many of the impulses that derive from romanticism, is the fear that because of a pinchpenny conservative attitude some as yet unknown potential of the self may never be realized. Hence for Rogers the "emerging modern individual" places his confidence not in norms of parents, religion, or society "but in his own changing experience as it occurs within himself." For him, as for the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, "all is in flux"; he is "his own highest authority." Like the jet set and the counter-culture, he assumes, is made possible by, and even demands abundance, for he takes his stand on the most affluent of theories about his own nature.

To Carnegie, who seems to have lived by the commonsense conviction that if all is in flux nothing is in flux, these ideas would have sounded very strange. In his mind three things are inseparable: the insistence on quick success (speedy affluence), "the insane thirst for liquor," and the temptation to speculation. This was also true for Bradford—Morton's men were gambling for a quick success, and such profits as came to them they spent "vainly in quaffing and drinking, both wine and strong waters in great excess (and, as some reported) £10 worth in a morning." Speed, intoxication, and gambling—they translate into one another in the consumer hero's pursuit of affluence. Consider Timothy Leary's letter to the New York *Times Book Review* in response to Midge Decter's review of *Buried Alive*, the biography of Janis Joplin. What to Miss Decter is a spendthrift waste of energy and resources is to Leary generosity of soul. Countering Miss Decter's emphasis on the emotional adolescence of Janis Joplin's musical environment, Leary contends that Janis "preferred to die young rather than to live old," and he concludes: "I'd rather shoot heroin with Janis than shoot heroines with Midge." Indeed, the letter suggests an outraged fan's response, published, say, in a 1947 issue of *Silver Screen*, to an attempt to demythologize Lana Turner.

THE counter-culture, chafing against the pace of historical time, has always been highly speculative. Its willingness to risk mightily at long odds is a characteristic of its youthfulness, but it is also an effort to hold onto youthful ecstasy: even a bad trip is better than no trip at all. It had been the same for Beat culture. Neal Cassady, dead at forty-two beside that railroad track in Mexico from a lethal mixture of drugs and alcohol (a form of Russian roulette), had progressed from *On the Road* to *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* no more touched by time than Orphan Annie. Kerouac, dead at forty-seven from a booze-induced hemorrhage, was at the end a disillusioned youth, not a middle-aged writer. Leary himself, the world-traveled dropout, refers scornfully to "the middle-aged readership" that will love Miss Decter's review. As he reads her review, it "states clearly the causes of the genocidal hatred of a generation for its young." This is an echo of the memoir he published four years ago in *Playboy*, when he had not entirely lost hope in a hedonic revolution by means of psychedelic drugs, and long before the Internal Revenue Service began to close in on his Brotherhood of Eternal Love. We all know, he said then, "why many old people envy carefree youth." Of course we know: the carefree young (whom Leary is not the first to applaud for having wisely chosen to be young and carefree) are wealthy in a way the old will never be; they can afford to speculate with their resources, one of the most important of which is time itself. Psychedelic drugs and rock music, which speed up the world of the young and therefore make it feel wealthier, are indispensable because they have the effect of cutting down the odds for those who exist in that world.

But what for Leary is the older generation's envy of carefree youth is at the same time its anxiety about the waste of the indispensable resource that youth is. A culture that is losing its grip on its young is beginning to live on borrowed time—in effect, heading into the future with dangerously depleted supplies of gas and beef. But this very condition is a proof of affluence: the carefree, impulse-releasing, system-hating young are—like the jet set, rock-music millionaires, and custom-made foreign cars—a form of conspicuous

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consumption. They are what we can afford, and when we cannot have what we can afford we are beginning to be poor again. What Bradford, Carnegie, and Reston fear is that when the young are removed from adversity as proofs of affluence they will indeed "sink to unworthy lives." From their perspective, Leary, who would like to speed the young up toward the goal of the hedonic revolution, is the traditional flim-flam man peddling get-rich-quick schemes. Even in decline, then, he helps to make clear the extent to which the fear of the counter-culture is a fear of affluence.

I suspect that there is enough of the Puritan in Norman Mailer to make it hard for him to choose his side in the Bradford-Morton conflict. Certainly there is enough of Carnegie's character ethic in him to put him with Carnegie on the subject of speculation. "Drugs are a spiritual form of gambling," he says in *Existential Errands.* "Any drug is bad finally in the same way that being a confirmed gambler is bad." For the drug taker "something is being mortgaged; something is being drawn out of the future. . . . Taking a psychedelic drug is living the life of a parasite; it's drawing on sweets you have not earned." He makes it clear that he is thinking of Leary, but he could also be thinking of the ever youthful and daring Ginsberg, who though he once refused to join Leary in an LSD march 'round the world, has nevertheless achieved a worldwide reputation as a drug speculator. Jane Kramer writes in *Allen Ginsberg in America* that Part II of *Howl* was inspired by a peyote vision, and that the poet once "communed with the Oakland Hell's Angels through a split sacrament of the *Prajna Paramita Sutra* and LSD."

Ginsberg and Leary are definitely in Morton's camp; indeed, they would have been perfectly at home among the Protestant radicals in Cromwell's England—and conversely, people like Owen Winstanley, George Fox, and Abiezer Coppe would have been perfectly at home as subjects of interviews in *Rolling Stone* or the *Berkeley Barb.* The Shakers, Familists, Quakers, Behmenists, Levellers, Baptists, Anabaptists, Diggers, Muggletonians, and Fifth Monarchy Men made up a young persons' counter-culture every bit as speculative, speed-crazed, and prodigal in its use of resources and energies, every bit as convinced of the imminence of a utopian reversal of establishment notions of time and scarcity, as were the inhabitants of Haight-Ashbury during its summer of love and flowers. Their story as told by Christopher Hill in *The World Turned Upside Down* reads like a brilliant effort to throw light on the American 60's. It is all there, including the divisive sectarian fanaticisms which, as usual, guaranteed that the world, however agitated, would remain rightside up.

The speculator, wanting if possible to bet on a sure thing, quite naturally resorts to magic. Both Winstanley's counter-culture and Leary's relied on magic to multiply energy in order to close the gap between poverty and affluence, between history and millennium. Professor Hill writes: "So astrology, alchemy, and natural magic contributed, together with biblical prophecy, to the radical outlook." An alchemist whom even Newton respected (and who could have been talking about Morton's New England Canaan) believed that gold would soon abound in the streets of the New Jerusalem so that "money will be like dross" and the corrupt establishment thereby subverted by the general affluence. We are back in the world of Theodore Roszak's Old Gnosis, expecting miraculous liberation from the technological wasteland—but we are also back in the passionately spendthrift black magic world of Charles Manson and Mick Jagger with its theme of death as the only alternative to waste on a grand scale.

Since Professor Hill views his subject with critical sympathy, it could be said that he has written a handbook for future counter-culturists, wherein they might see their aspirations in historical perspective and thereby learn how not to subvert their own efforts. There is, of course, little chance that the book will ever be put to such use, since the prison of the historical perspective is the very thing from which most counter-culturists are trying to escape. From history one learns to view the taste for the limitless with irony and as a preparation for tragedy. There is, for example, little indication in Ann Charters's recent biography of him that Kerouac, for all the disillusion of his last years, ever realized this. History after its brutal fashion simply had the last word with him. Like Jimi Hendrix or Jim Morrison, he proved out the truth of Carnegie's advice to *his* young men: that speculation "saps the sources of that persistent and concentrated energy upon which depends the permanent success, and often the very safety, of [one's] business."

III

The fear of affluence, involved as it is with the fear of loss of control over time, is an important factor in our effort to conserve the past as a resource without which present and future cannot be managed. But the past as traditionally conserved is a reservoir of attitudes, values, and techniques that tend to install the fear of affluence as a permanent fixture in human personality—and so, conceivably, tend to deny us possible millennia of abundance. In this view, the treatment of the past as the crude material out of which convenient fictions can be fashioned may itself be a gesture of affluence. "We think of the past as being unchangeable," William S. Burroughs says in an *Evergreen Review* interview. "Actually, the past is ours to shape and change as we will." The extent to which this is not an idle remark can be seen in Burroughs's reliance in his fiction on montage and cut-up techniques

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as well as in his fascination with such speculative gadgets as Scientologist L. Ron Hubbard's E-Meter (an electronic means for escaping from the jealous clutches of the past), the Reichean orgone energy accumulator, and the stroboscopic dream machine. Even as the heroin-shooting Old Bull in *On the Road* he showed signs of developing into a unique combination of Rabelais, Sade, and the Renaissance magus John Dee. At the same time, as the above quote indicates, he has more than a little in common with O'Brien, the sinister Inner Party spokesman in Orwell's *1984*.

Burroughs is also in the forefront of those for whom the most satisfactory experience of affluence is a release from conventional sexual restrictions. Traditionally, sex has been a symbol of energy in the broadest sense and of the precariousness of the human attempt to manage it. The Reichean orgone energy accumulator is a magical energy-multiplier that would have fascinated that 17th-century alchemist who hoped to pave the New Jerusalem with gold. The orgy is a spendthrift way of experiencing the fundamentally benevolent abundance of energy; at the same time it is a heuristic device for teaching participants the inseparability of waste and experiential satisfaction. The marauding anarchic bands of homosexual youths in Burroughs's *The Wild Boys* (he has stated in *Rolling Stone* that he finds the scenario personally attractive) are sexual spendthrifts, prodigal sons who will never have to come home. Quite consistently, in a recent *Harper's* Burroughs sees sexual shame in pinchpenny life-inhibiting terms and links it with Watergate secrecy and the Nixon administration's efforts to censor sexually affluent books and films: "When nobody cares, then shame ceases to exist and we can all return to the Garden of Eden without God prowling around like a house dick with a tape recorder."

The traditional institutional model for the economical management of resources and energy—including, of course, sexual energy—is monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Conversely, a conspicuous consumption of extramarital sex has always been a way of demonstrating affluence (to a sensate age a Don Giovanni's wealth is so obvious and so enormous that it defies translation into dollars and cents). Heterosexual marriage inhibits the taste for the limitless, and attacks on it in the name of one liberational cause or another (almost any one will do) are usually signs that someone has taken it as a convenient scapegoat for the parsimony of history, as if it were a jealous and miserly dragon protecting a gold horde. Hence the sexual antinomianism of so many of the 17th-century radicals, especially the Ranters, who, says Professor Hill, "systematically proclaimed the right of natural man to behave naturally," which meant a glorification and prodigal use of God-given impulses, and of course a deliberate flouting of the "inhibitions which the Puritan ethic was imposing." The flouting continues in our own Ranter-infested culture. Ginsberg outlining the good society to a Berkeley seminar, for example, proposes "the sexual commune as an intelligent, spiritual way of life as against a kind of dinosaur socialism run by a bunch of sexually and spiritually perverted Marxists," and it is clear in context that to him the real enemy is the Puritan ethic with its sexually pinchpenny, slow-paced monogamous marriage. Burroughs is, if anything, more extreme: if we are to have anything like an ideal society, the family as well as the nation must go.

A CULTURE both experiences its affluence and squanders the resources that make it possible by increasing options. Thus the removal of social restraints from serial polygamy, spouse-swapping, live sex shows, fornication, adultery, unmarried heterosexual unions, but especially from homosexuality and androgyny, has to be correlated with gross national product: they are what we can afford, or what we need to think we can afford, since at this point in time if we could not afford them we would feel poor indeed. The capacity of women to be able to dispense with men, or of men with women, is a sign of luxury. Burroughs's homosexual wild boys are well off without women; in fact, they never had it so good. "I certainly have no objections if lesbians would like to do the same," he remarks. Jill Johnston in *Lesbian Nation* agrees that they ought to do the same: "Until all women are lesbians there will be no true political revolution."

But perhaps the most affluent option of all, since it takes the best of both worlds, is that of the "new androgyne," the third sex as it is enthusiastically designated by James Nolan in a recent *Ramparts*. Mr. Nolan believes that the new androgyny was released (as if from long bondage) by technological culture "together with deep exploration of our psyches by acid and meditation." All of these post-traditional options are speeded-up sex (the pill, the vasectomy, and abortion are the familiar accelerating devices). It is the speed that tends to make them anti-personal and even, as Rollo May has argued, puritanic in their own way. Insofar as others are perceived as processes only, they are immediately available for consumption in the interest of the consumer's own speculative process. But it takes time to discover persons, which was one reason why the old-style courtship was slow-paced and sexually pinchpenny. The new options are highly speculative and ordered to get-rich-quick satisfaction that needs only the cooperation of casual others or (for those fearful of all encroachments on the autonomous self) the availability of appropriate erotic machinery.

Obscenity and pornography have always been expressions of a complaint that available sexual energies are being too straitly conserved in the in-

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terest of established pinchpenny values. They are therefore forms of wasting that traditionally have been available to the affluent or would-be affluent as spending sprees. Under favorable circumstances, however, they can be rationalized as a necessarily violent clearing away of suffocating rubbish under which the sources of life are waiting to be liberated: sexual forms of a necessarily lavish desecration and degradation that imply a hero who if he has to waste the land (or his own creative potential) in order to purify it or release its pristine energies will not hesitate to do so. It is in this context that one ought to hear Lenny Bruce's plea in Julian Barry's play *Lenny*: "You need the deviate. Make room for the deviate. You need that madman to stand up and tell you when you're blowing it." The obscene transgressor becomes the savior who appeals to our fury with the laggard pace of time and the niggardly rationing of energy and resources—a fury that must in its own interest assume that the taste for the limitless is economically and morally right. Bruce is in the tradition of a man he probably never heard of: the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin who believed that "The will to destroy is a creative will." In Bakunin as in Bruce this will is anti-conservationist in its assumption that affluence follows waste, an assumption that helps to explain why Karl Mannheim in *Ideology and Utopia* has his say about Bakunin in the chapter on the utopian mentality.

But Burroughs too is in Bakunin's tradition with his suggestion that since the "whole war universe is a verbal universe," and since "all hate, all pain, all fear, all lust is contained in the word," it might be a good idea to rub out words and "explore alternate methods of communication." It is the kind of quick solution that assumes affluence as a present or achievable condition. It assumes too a kind of speculator who has so little doubt about the limitless resources of virtue and vital energy that he is not a speculator in his own eyes at all as he bets his roll on the grand rubbing out, the cleansing fire, or even the bath of blood. If he is willing to waste a lot in order to live a little it is because he is so sure that there is a lot more where that little came from. This is at bottom an elitist notion: it assumes the naturally and justly excessive needs of a minority and at the same time assumes the willingness of the majority to sacrifice so that the few may dazzle it with visions of magnificent living. Burroughs like Henry Miller, then, belongs with aristocratic romantics like Swinburne and Baudelaire, part of whose appeal is that they appear to be liberated from the fear of affluence.

IV

One of the most striking historical analogues for the prodigal disposal of resources that in Miller, Bruce, and Burroughs is a variation on a familiar theme is the great slaughter of the buffalo after the Civil War. At their peak, the Western historian Francis Haines estimates, forty million head roamed over half of the North American continent. When Kerouac and Cassady were roaring back and forth over the central plains indulging their own taste for the limitless, those millions had long before been reduced to a few hundred, thanks in great part to the speeding up of transportation facilities. In the 1870's, says Haines, between ten and twenty thousand men were in the field at one time—hunters, skinners, drivers, cooks, helpers—dazzled with dreams of quick success, thinking in their Cassady-like innocence that the buffalo would last forever, and dying, most of them, beside their own Mexican railroad tracks with their heads full of empty dreams. They devastated the enormous herds, taking hides and tongues, sometimes heads for trophies or a few of the choicer cuts, but little else. The obscenity was epic: rotting carcasses and whitened skeletons polluted the prairie as lavishly as the living buffalo had once adorned it. In the meantime, Haines continues, the wolves and coyotes prospered greatly, got fat without effort, multiplied prodigiously, and became a source of income to another kind of scavenger, the despised wolfer who poisoned the predators and sold their skins for a dollar or two apiece. Finally there was nothing left but the bones, to be gathered up and shipped, millions of pounds a year, to Eastern sugar refineries and fertilizer plants or, appropriately enough, to the manufacturers of bone china dishes for the affluent.

But it was a catastrophe for the Indian, who (unlike us) was easy to de-accelerate because he had so few ways of going fast. Time slowed down for him in proportion as it speeded up for the Westward-rushing white man. "The buffalo," Haines says, "had been the central figure in the Indians' whole pattern of existence and its disappearance left a spiritually disturbed people, socially disorganized and lacking a meaningful pattern for a new way of life." Deprived of food and land, harassed by the army, and bamboozled by the government, they were easy victims to the mystic ghost dance that during 1890 swept the plains with its promise of a supernaturally-aided turning upside down of their world. With the ghost dance came the ghost shirt, worn with the expectation that it would miraculously stop bullets. Half of the Sioux braves who were slaughtered at Wounded Knee shortly after Christmas of that year were wearing these magical shirts. After that there was no more ghost-dance movement, only the melancholy doldrums of the reservation.

So the Indian was no less a victim to speed and speculation than, later, Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin were to be. But speed had also made possible the golden age of the Plains Indians. This gorgeous hybrid culture, which was at its peak early in the 19th century, could not flower, says

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Professor Haines, "until pollinated by contributions from the encroaching Europeans." It depended on the wares brought in by traders—knives, needles, cloth, guns, etc.—but the major European contribution was the horse culture transmitted by the Spanish colonies in the Southwest. The horse accelerated the Indians' lives, gave them that degree of control over their environment without which life is a grim and risky treadmill, made it possible for them to exploit their buffalo economy for an affluence that must previously have been beyond their wildest dreams, and gave them "a large amount of leisure time that could be used to expand the whole culture pattern." They lived more comfortably, dressed more lavishly, ate better, traveled with relative ease, had time for their elaborate war games, their dazzling horse pageantry, their sun-dance ceremonies.

In a condition where the staple of their economy could only appear limitless (they could not begin to kill off the annual increase of the herds) they went as fast as they could go, and for those young braves whose dangerous job it was to ride into the stampeding herds in order to kill the great beasts the pace was no doubt often enough too swift. Nevertheless, not having acquired the taste for the limitless, they were in no danger of becoming speed freaks, and they seem not to have been bothered by the fear of affluence. Possibly they had their James Restons to tell them of the advantage of going slower, or their Thoreaus to ask them why they thought they had to consume ten pounds of fresh buffalo meat per person per day when a diet of fish, beans, and huckleberries would be both healthier and less risky, or even their Timothy Learys to urge them to swap their buffalo robes and horses for mescaline and see what the hedonic revolution had to offer, but if there were such persons among them they seem not to have left much impression. Perhaps the Indians understood that whatever of value there had been in their relatively slow-paced past was available to them only insofar as it remained institutionalized in their present moment, so that there was no going back; there was only the problem of how best to go on if they wished to protect what had been incorporated from the valued past.

In any event, the Indians had little choice. With their limited resources they were doomed to compete with the white man and to become (as the blacks had already become) part of the adversity that he was using to accelerate his own pace. So the very forces that had made possible the Indians' golden age were hurrying them to Wounded Knee and the sad slowdown of the reservation. It was not that they went too fast, got too affluent, and dripped too much fat, then, but that they lost their vital momentum when an adversary culture went faster and became richer. Perhaps our fear of affluence is in some measure a fear that we will suffer a similar fate: that caught as we are in an accelerating competition of affluence we will lose that part of our past still available to us, without which the future we aspire to will be our undoing.

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Mandelstam's Witness

Robert Alter

IN MEMORY OF YOSEF HAEFRATI, THE GIFTED LITERARY SCHOLAR, KILLED ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, APRIL 17, 1974.

"I am easy in my mind now," Akhmatova said to me in the sixties. "We have seen how durable poetry is."
—Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope Against Hope*

The people need poetry that will be
their own secret
to keep them awake forever,
and bathe them in the bright-haired wave
of its breathing.
—Osip Mandelstam, *Voronezh Notebooks*

THERE is something oddly legendary about the life and posthumous career of Osip Mandelstam, as though he had died not in a Soviet concentration camp in 1938, with a death certificate issued in due form by the totalitarian bureaucracy, but in some shadowy recess of medieval mystery. He is just now beginning to be recognized in the West as one of the major 20th-century poets; many of those who can read him in the original regard him as the greatest Russian poet since Pushkin; but he has achieved this prominence only through an uncanny resurrection after Stalin's attempt to bury his poetic legacy together with him. His poetry has survived largely through the efforts of his extraordinary wife, Nadezhda, much of it actually in an "oral tradition," held fast, line by unpublishable line, in her tenacious memory and in that of a few loyal friends. There is a much more varied oral tradition about Mandelstam's life and death, a good deal of it contradictory, and one of Mme. Mandelstam's functions as a memoirist has been to sift these sundry accounts, trying to separate fact from fabrication.

Toward the end of the first of her two large volumes of memoirs, *Hope Against Hope**—it is a book that will surely remain one of the great texts on the nature of totalitarianism—she attempts to penetrate the curtain that fell between her and her husband when he was taken off for the second and last time, on the night of May 1, 1938, by agents of the NKVD. Over the years she spent exiled in the remote Eastern regions of the USSR, and later when she was permitted to reside again in Moscow after 1964, various survivors of the Great Terror came to see her with what they presented as eyewitness testimonies of her husband's last days in the transports and the camps. These she checks against one another and against what she herself knew of her husband's condition and habits with the shrewd skepticism of an experienced criminal lawyer. Among the stories to which she seems to grant full credence is one told her by a certain physicist, who chooses to remain anonymous, and who claims to have been in the Vladivostok transit camp at the same time as Mandelstam. One night in the camp, the physicist—Mme. Mandelstam designates him "L."—was invited by a non-political, that is, criminal, prisoner to climb up to a loft with him where, with a whole gang of criminals, L. might listen to some poetry. In the candlelit loft L. made out a barrel on top of which were laid out an open can of food and white bread, unimaginable delicacies in the prison world where no meal was more than a cup of watery soup. "Sitting with the criminals was a man with a gray stubble of beard, wearing a yellow leather coat. He was reciting verse which L. recognized. It was Mandelstam. The criminals offered him bread and the canned stuff, and he calmly helped himself and ate. . . . He was listened to in complete silence and sometimes asked to repeat a poem."

Whether or not the incident actually occurred as reported, the very existence of the story and its acceptance by the poet's widow should suggest that poetry retains an intensity of meaning and value in Russian culture far surpassing any role it now plays in the West. (Could one imagine a story told about Yeats, Valéry, or Wallace Stevens fascinating a rough audience of criminal compatriots, enjoying their protection?) Even should it prove quite faithful to fact, the anecdote has the quality of legend in projecting into a vividly dramatized form a sensed inner truth of the poet's character and the aspirations of his work—like the old story about Judah Halevi, the great medi-

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eval Hebrew poet, who was imagined to have been trampled to death by an Arab horseman after finally arriving at the gates of Jerusalem and reciting his "Ode to Zion." The stubble-bearded bard performing to convicts for sustenance in the candlelit loft is the same Mandelstam who from his youth cherished the idea that people would always be good to him because of his gift for poetry. He was not, however, by any means a naive man, and this seemingly childish belief was, as we shall see, rooted in a deeply meditated set of ideas on the nature of poetry and its ontological, spiritual, and political implications.

OSIP MANDELSTAM was born in Warsaw in 1891, the son of a prosperous Jewish leather merchant. When he was still quite small, the family moved to Petersburg, a fact worth noting in its historical context, since Jews were not then permitted to reside in the city, which means that Emil Mandelstam had managed to obtain for himself the status of "privileged Jew." In 1904 Osip was sent to the prestigious Tenishev Commercial School in Petersburg—a decade later one of its students would be Vladimir Nabokov—where he received a thorough classical education (classical antiquity was to pervade his verse) and, extracurricularly, a good dose of Social-Revolutionary Marxism (this he would outgrow). After graduating from the Tenishev School in 1907, Mandelstam traveled in Western Europe, spending some time in Paris and Heidelberg, studying Old French literature, and quite consciously preparing himself for the vocation of poetry he already felt he was destined to fulfill. In 1911 for a while he undertook studies in Romance and Germanic philology at Petersburg University, and in order to escape the university's anti-Jewish *numerus clausus,* he converted to Lutheranism. The conversion, according to his widow, was strictly *pro forma,* but the uncertain evolution of Mandelstam's relation to Christianity is a question to which I shall return.

In 1912, Mandelstam became associated with an important group of younger poets who called themselves Acmeists, and who were rebelling against the Symbolist school which had provided the leading emphasis in Russian poetry for more than a decade. The Acmeists, as Clarence Brown characterizes them in his admirable critical study of Mandelstam,* were remarkably close in aims and sensibility to the Anglo-American Imagists of the same period—with even a common literary genealogy by way of Théophile Gautier and the French Parnassians. Against the Symbolists' mystical pursuit through poetic language of a hazy beckoning Beyond, the Acmeists cultivated qualities of clarity and hardness in their verse, sought to create out of the tactile and visual concreteness of things here and now a new chaste poetry of classical precision. Mandelstam's first volume of verse appeared in 1913 with the appropriately Acmeist title, *Stone.* Even in translation, one can see that Mandelstam, scarcely out of adolescence, was an astonishingly poised poet. Here, for example, is a poem in his early Acmeist manner, sharply visual, polished to a smooth hardness in its tactile and kinesthetic unity, and explicitly affirming the serene control of the artist. Mandelstam was eighteen when he wrote it.

On the pale blue enamel
conceivable in April
the birches raised their branches
and vespered imperceptibly.

The fragile netting froze
the pattern fine and small
like the design on porcelain
plates—precisely drawn
when the courteous artist limns it
on the firmament of glass,
conscious of his passing power,
unmindful of sad death.†

Stone would be followed by only two other volumes of verse in Mandelstam's lifetime, *Tristia,*

* *Mandelstam,* Cambridge University Press, 320 pp., $13.95. English readers owe a large debt of gratitude to Brown, who has done so much to uncover Mandelstam, and has himself translated most of Mandelstam's prose with grace and clarity.

† The translation is one of those done by Clarence Brown for the purposes of his critical book, and of these, one can say that they are at least quite usable by a contemporary reader of English. Brown has collaborated with W. S. Merwin on a *Selected Poems of Osip Mandelstam* (Atheneum, 100 pp., $6.25) and many of these renderings are wonderfully elegant, moving English poems. The most striking ones are surely finer than even the best of Merwin's own fairly impressive poetic production, if that is any indication of the power of the originals. Nevertheless, my colleague Simon Karlinsky, the eminent Slavicist, has suggested to me that Merwin's poised versions of Mandelstam are like monochromatic representations of richly colored paintings, and Brown's generally accurate construal of the original sometimes falters. By all critical accounts, Mandelstam's Russian verse is a continuous pyrotechnic performance of word-play, sound-play, and layered allusiveness, typically using traditional metrical schemes and rhyming forms to generate a vibrantly expressive musicality. But what happens when anyone but a poet of towering genius tries to cast Mandelstam in English rhyme or to reproduce his word-play is painfully illustrated by Bernard Meares's attempts in *Modern Poetry in Translation 17.* The rhymes clink and tinkle absurdly, the diction is dolloped with little bits of poesy like "beauteous plight" and "divine abyss," and Stalin, in a devastating poetic assault on totalitarianism, is rendered in cute Disney fashion as "the gremlin in the Kremlin." A disaster in the opposite direction is *The Complete Poetry of Osip Emilevich Mandelstam,* done in collaboration by Burton Raffel and Alla Burago (State University of New York Press, 353 pp., $15). The best one can say of this is that it gives some rough idea of the contents of all the extant poems, but it is very difficult to experience these translations as poetry. Raffel has a tin ear; his renditions are arhythmic and often unidiomatic, and in stumbling after the guidance of his native informant he very frequently succeeds in making gibberish out of whatever the original may mean. For the time being, then, our best English approximation of Mandelstam is clearly Brown and Merwin, and it is their versions that I will be citing here unless I indicate otherwise.

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published in 1922, and, in 1928, *Poems,* which incorporated both the previous volumes and added to them twenty new poems, written between 1921 and 1925. Mandelstam had rapidly moved beyond the Acmeist manner to a more difficult, personal, meditative, and complicated associational style. At the same time, by 1922, after directly witnessing the horrors of the Civil War and the first improvised stages of the Bolshevik terror, he had come to see the full dire implications of the Revolution for everything he truly valued. His sense of estrangement from the new totalitarian Russia led to a five-year period of silence as a poet in the later 20's. By 1929, when it was clear that Mandelstam would not and could not march to party directives in his poetry, he became *persona non grata,* and his verse was no longer publishable, not really because it was counterrevolutionary but because it insisted on a realm of imagination utterly beyond revolutionary jurisdiction. After achieving a sense of inner release in 1929 by lashing back in an essay, "Fourth Prose," at the Soviet literary hacks who had subjected him to a campaign of vilification, Mandelstam began again to write poetry freely, dictating, as always, to his wife, who hid the precious notebooks from the secret police as the couple moved back and forth across Russia. He was arrested for the first time in Moscow in 1934, after an informer had conveyed to the Cheka the text of his withering poetic lampoon of Stalin. Though his interrogation in the Lubianka, the dreaded Moscow central prison, induced a psychotic episode after his release, he got off "easily" with a sentence of exile to the Urals, and the extraordinary flow of creative activity that had begun in 1930 continued more or less unbroken until his final arrest. The death certificate given to his brother in 1940 lists the date of death as December 27, 1938, the cause: "heart failure."

A good part of the subsequent Mandelstam story has taken place on the other side of the world. In 1955, a carefully annotated two-volume edition of Mandelstam's collected works in Russian was published in New York by two distinguished émigré scholars, Gleb Struve and Boris Filippov; between 1964 and 1971 this was to be reissued in an expanded three-volume edition. Once the collected works appeared in New York, Nadezhda Mandelstam tells us, she felt she could breathe easy for the first time in seventeen years, knowing that the great trust that had been her principal reason for going on alone through such bleakness was now fulfilled: her husband's surviving poetry would be passed on to posterity. By the later 60's, as cultural policy in the USSR again became more repressive after the brief illusory interlude of the Thaw, a new underground literature, or *samizdat,* of forbidden works circulated in typescript, began to flourish, and Mandelstam was soon a cult figure in this world of clandestine Russian letters. His widow's first volume of memoirs was also intently read in *samizdat,* while its publication abroad in 1970, followed now by the appearance here of a second volume,* makes the poet's exemplary stance against the despotism of the revolutionary regime a matter of unforgettable public record for Western readers. A qualified, ambiguous, "rehabilitation" of Mandelstam was granted after Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, but the publication of a volume of his selected poems, first announced in 1959, was somehow delayed until 1974.

It is a miracle of fortunate coincidence that so extraordinary a poet should have had as a wife so extraordinary a witness. *Hope Against Hope* focuses on the four years from the moment when the knock on the door in the night introduced the Mandelstams directly into the realities of the *univers concentrationnaire. Hope Abandoned* works backward to the early years of the couple's relationship, beginning in 1919, and forward to Nadezhda Mandelstam's exile in Central Asia and her efforts after 1956 to effect a full rehabilitation of her husband. The later volume could have benefited from some extensive pruning: part of the argument is repetitious of *Hope Against Hope* or internally repetitious; the abundant disquisitions on poetry and criticism rarely justify their length; and there is perhaps a greater element of paying off old scores against Russian literary figures than one would like. Nevertheless, *Hope Abandoned* gives us a great deal of fascinating biographical material and contextual information on the poems, and it contains many passages remarkable for their insight into how people behave in the most harrowing historical circumstances.

What makes Mme. Mandelstam so valuable a memoirist is above all the unsentimental clarity with which she views experiences that might invite pathos, self-pity, or a swollen rhetoric of outrage. It is this that enables her in *Hope Against Hope* to reveal in such convincing concreteness the tenor of life under a maniacally arbitrary regime of terror; in this one respect, Stalinism was worse than Hitlerism, for even loyal party membership and pure Christian ancestry provided no guarantee against the anonymous denunciation and its terrible consequences (the secret police had its quotas to fill, just like the factories, and the human material was finally a matter of indifference). This same steely clarity of vision is present in Mme. Mandelstam's second volume, perhaps most strikingly in her indignant response to a remark by Anna Akhmatova—an intimate friend of both the Mandelstams and herself one of the major Russian poets of the last two generations—that people abroad envied the Soviet vic-

* *Hope Abandoned,* translated by Max Hayward, Atheneum, 687 pp., $13.95.

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tims their suffering. To Mme. Mandelstam's tough-minded way of thinking, such a remark could only be sheer posturing. "There was nothing to envy. There was absolutely nothing at all uplifting about our suffering. It is pointless to look for some redeeming feature; there was nothing to it except animal fear and pain." And with this she goes on for three memorable pages to describe the actual experience of animal fear under a reign of terror, how time itself clots into endless heavy moments in the consciousness of the potential victim waiting day and night for the hidden agents to come.

There is one aspect of Nadezhda Mandelstam as witness that poses special problems in getting a proper bearing on the contradictory figure of her husband, and that is the evident seriousness of her Christian belief, made particularly explicit in the second of her two volumes. Like him, she was born a Jew; during the intensity of their years together, they seem to have shared some sort of private exploration of Christian faith; but I think there are grounds for inferring that she has gone quite beyond where he was in this respect during the years of his mature achievement. Their relationship, as she makes clear in *Hope Abandoned,* had been an unusual mixture of exuberance and deep intimacy marked with certain lines of stress. Mandelstam in many ways was quite tyrannical toward his wife, insisted on refashioning her in his own image. She was generally submissive, thinking of herself as a foolish slip of a girl who needed instruction, but there were also hot sparks of rebelliousness in her which occasionally flared up, and I am led to suspect in her present Christian posture something of the loyal disciple who goes beyond the master, or diverges from him, in seeming to follow his path. This does not, let me emphasize, lead the memoirist to any explicit misrepresentation of Mandelstam's allegiances, for she is completely candid even about those of his Jewish loyalties which she cannot quite fathom, but it strikes me that the general tenor of the two volumes may be a little misleading in regard to the role of Christianity in the poet's work.

Mme. Mandelstam's sharp lucidity in discussing the events of the past half-century is so immediately impressive that one has to read through most of her thousand pages to realize that her ultimate view of reality is rather eerily otherworldly. Toward the end, she begins to talk of a reunion in the hereafter with the soul of the departed Osip, and of the supreme joy of dying with the name of Christ on one's lips. I have no way of ascertaining whether Mandelstam himself ever expressed interest in these consoling beliefs, but in the moments of his utmost seriousness—which is to say, when he was making poetry—the vision of human existence he articulated was very different from this, even in those poems where he made use of Christian symbols. He is much closer to Wallace Stevens's sense of man living "unsponsored, free" in "an old chaos of the sun" than to any outlook of traditional Christianity. There is no affinity for martyrdom, no yearning for celestial refuges anywhere in his verse. These lines from a 1922 poem are perfectly continuous with whatever he wrote, early and late, though this particular emphasis becomes stronger and more resonant as he begins to enter more and more into the perceived shadow of his own death:

> The warm droppings of a few hens
> and a tepid muddle of sheep.
> For life, for life and care, I'll give up everything.
> A kitchen match would keep me warm.
>
> Look, all I have with me is a clay pot
> And the twittering of the stars in my thin ears.
> I can't help loving through unfledged bird skin
> the yellow of grass, warmth of the black earth.

It is quite in keeping with this sense of things that Mandelstam never thought of himself as a martyr after he had been made the object of persecution, never imagined his fate as an imitation of Christ. His widow, whatever her own commitments of belief, is too keen an observer not to recollect this firmly, and she states the matter with epigrammatic succinctness: "M. had no taste for martyrdom, but the price one had to pay to live was much too high."

Did Mandelstam's Jewish origins have anything to do with the nature of his imaginative work, with the stance toward reality that he ultimately assumed? Was he a vestigial Jew, merely an ex-Jew, or a Jew somehow productively conscious of his Jewishness? The second possibility was never open to him, and I think one can say, with only a little schematic simplification, that in the course of his maturation he moved perceptibly from the first position to the third, from a vestigial Jewish identity to one that was integrated into his imaginative life.

To begin with, as the gifted son with literary aspirations of Russified bourgeois parents, being a Jew must have seemed more a hindrance than anything else, an obstacle to entering into the fullness of Russian culture. Mandelstam's lack of compunction about going through the forms of conversion in order to be admitted into Petersburg University is not really surprising. In the autobiographical chapters he composed in 1925 under the title, *The Noise of Time,** the Jewish aspects of his parents' home constitute a moribund realm of obsolescent rituals and traditional objects in tatters and shreds. On the bookshelves of his "enlightened" father, unread Hebrew volumes lay gathering dust a shelf below Goethe and Schiller, and two shelves below his mother's

* The full text is available in *The Prose of Osip Mandelstam,* translated by Clarence Brown, Princeton University Press, 209 pp., paperback, $2.95. Selections were also published in COMMENTARY, October 1965.

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Pushkin and Lermontov. His father, like many comfortable Jewish burghers of the period, hired a Hebrew tutor for the boy, but the language with its "spiky script" remained alien, impenetrable, and the child vividly sensed that this, too, was an empty charade when he saw his young Hebrew nationalist tutor hide his Jewish pride upon going out into the street.

On a visit to his grandparents in Riga, Mandelstam recalls his grandfather placing a black and yellow cloth over his shoulders and making him mumble some uncomprehended Hebrew words. The memory looks suspiciously like a compound of actual recollection and projected fantasy, since there is no traditional practice of placing a *talit* over a child in this way except in synagogue on the festival of Simchat Torah; but the distortion is revealing, for it betrays a sense of being swathed, entangled, in the musty vestitures of a moribund Judaism. The slightly puzzling yellow of the cloth must be that dull brownish-yellow hue that the wool of an old prayer shawl characteristically assumes. In the private symbology of his poetry and prose, Mandelstam would repeatedly use yellow and black as the emblematic colors of Judaism, often reinforcing through them a sense of Judaism as belonging to an inverted netherworld, apart from the multicolored pageantry of Russian reality. In a poem written in 1916, he thinks of himself born into that ancestral world illumined by a black sun: "At Jerusalem's gate/ a black sun has risen./ The yellow one frightens me more."

The paradoxical complement to the images of Jewishness as decay and perhaps interment is his reiterated vision of it, again in *The Noise of Time,* as a realm of formless origins: "All the elegant mirage of Petersburg [evoked in the preceding paragraphs] was merely a dream, a brilliant covering thrown over the abyss, while round about there sprawled the chaos of Judaism—not a motherland, not a house, not a hearth, but precisely a chaos, the unknown womb world whence I had issued, which I feared, about which I made vague conjectures and fled, always fled." The flight from the unknown womb world invites psychological conjecture, especially since Mandelstam oddly fancied his marriage to a Jewish woman as an ultimately incestuous union, an idea he stressed in a 1920 poem where Nadezhda figures as the biblical Leah who in turn—the refraction of sources is typical of Mandelstam—blends with Lot's daughters.

For the younger Mandelstam, in other words, to become preeminently Russian, and beyond that, European, was to define oneself by joining with what was patently other, and so to escape the threat of a primal merging with one's origins. Clarence Brown aptly observes that the implicit opposite to "Judaic chaos" was Christian order, and it is Christianity not as a corpus of belief but primarily as an aesthetic idea, the embodiment of an elaborated order, that attracts this poet devoted to the creation of architectural coherence in language. The allure of order was compounded by a sense of Christianity as a sphere of serious spirituality that stood in contrast to the jejune worldly rationalism of his parents' post-traditional Jewish home. For a while he entertained the notion of the church as the necessary foundation for society, but, his widow informs us, by the 1920's he had completely dropped this idea.

WHAT is behind the younger Mandelstam's theorizing about the need for Christianity is a distinctive Russian version of a familiar modern pattern: the writer of Jewish origins who is impelled at least in part to deny or denigrate his Jewishness in order to participate fully in the literary culture of his country. On the crudest level, but also the one most universally shared, the phenomenon is perceptible in the feeling of so many literary people in this predicament that there is something *unseemly* about being a Jew, something that goes against the very nature of cultivated letters; and the young Mandelstam in fact appears to be troubled by feelings of this sort. Such a sense of malaise, or inferiority, may be no different for a writer than for anyone else suffering from the anxieties of belonging to a cultural minority, but what complicates the situation of the imaginative writer is the profound way in which any national literature constitutes an enormously nuanced, self-allusive system intimately linked with a particular history and a particular set of traditions. For someone from a minority, in other words, to enter into the system and create from within it involves a difficult process of assimilation in depth, what becomes in many a hyper-acculturation.

The Christian character of so much European literature of course poses special problems for the Jewish writer embarked on the adventure of assimilation. In the West, where the Christian aspect of literary culture has tended to be somewhat diffuse or merely residual over the last two centuries, it was usually sufficient for a writer of Jewish origins to make himself into a reasonable facsimile of his counterparts in the majority culture in regard to matters of style, taste, intellectual reference, but not of creed: in America, for example, one could compose a substantial list of such self-consciously acculturated poets, critics, novelists. In Russia, as far as an outsider can judge, the case seems to have been somewhat different, at least until quite recently. The two giants of the 19th-century Russian novel were of course deeply serious Christians. The turn-of-the-century Russian intellectual scene was marked by a reawakened interest in Christian mysticism; and the Symbolists, who were Mandelstam's first models as poets even though he was to break with their poetic procedures, were profoundly involved in Christian religious ideas—in pointed contrast

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to most of the French Symbolists, from whom they were supposed to have derived.

Russia, then, becomes an instructive extreme instance of the problematics of literary assimilation, offering in our century a literature with strong bonds to Christianity and at the same time a literature where, as nowhere else, Jews achieve the highest artistic eminence. The identification of Russian things with Christian belief is, I suspect, more potent for someone who is primarily a writer of poetry than it is for a writer of prose. Pasternak, who was also born a Jew and with whom Mandelstam maintained a guarded friendship, enthusiastically embraced Christianity, and his conversion surely had some connection with his highly conscious aspiration to attain a place of honor in Russian poetry. Babel, on the other hand, the great short-story writer whom Mandelstam also knew and admired, was not tempted by Christianity as such, though in dealing in his fiction with moral character operating in the medium of history, his tendency to hyper-acculturation took the form of an oscillating fascination with the alien Cossack ethos of virility and violence.

PERHAPS the apogee of Mandelstam's romance with Christianity is a 1915 essay, "Pushkin and Scriabin," of which only fragments have survived. From the passages Clarence Brown incorporates in his critical study, one can readily observe the strained intermarriage between Mandelstam's personal conception of art and his tendency at that early point in his career to identify art with Christianity. Since redemption and sacrifice have already been effected by Christ, Mandelstam argues, these qualities have no place in art, which is thus left to be absolutely free, to constitute its own sphere of joyous playfulness. It is uniquely through Christianity, then, that art becomes a realm of spontaneous freedom. The rather abstract ingenuity of the argument, of course, has nothing whatever to do with the historical facts of Christianity and the nature of art under the Christian dispensation. The notion of art as play and freedom is something Mandelstam would cling to always, for which he would eventually die, but by the 20's he disavowed "Pushkin and Scriabin" as his aesthetic credo—at least partly, one can assume, because of its programmatic insistence on the Christian component of art.

It is revealing that Mandelstam's fullest, most original statement on the nature of poetry, "Talking About Dante"* (1933), manages to discuss the author of *The Divine Comedy* for some 16,000 words without once considering him as a Christian poet. Dante's poem is described as a vast "stereometric body," a many-hued wonder of "crystallographic" form, the supreme realized example of the infinite transformability of poetic material, but it is never spoken of as a statement of Christian faith, a poetic unity made possible through the systematic coherence of classical Christian theology. By this point in his life Mandelstam was sure of the idea of lucid order as a product of humanistic culture, and he no longer needed to associate that idea with Christianity. He had a deeply abiding sense of being heir to a Judeo-Christian tradition, but, as Mme. Mandelstam observes in *Hope Abandoned,* he linked that tradition with the Hellenic one as part of a general Mediterranean heritage of civilizing values; and I think the inference is clear that he came to see Christianity and Judaism alike as bodies of humanistic achievement, not of theological imperatives. Having shifted to that perspective, he was able to adopt a more affirmative attitude toward his own Jewishness, which could now be seen with less ambivalence not as a hindrance but as a valuable, historically authenticated point of departure for profound participation in an overarching European culture.

"As a little bit of musk fills an entire house," Mandelstam noted memorably in *The Noise of Time,* "so the least influence of Judaism overflows all of one's life." In context, the implications of the statement are more ambiguous than might appear, for what immediately follows is that description of the Judaism of his childhood as a moribund world, so the clinging pungency might, by inference, be an odor of decay. The younger Mandelstam indeed exhibits an element of uneasiness about his Jewish origins: in the pre-Revolutionary days in Petersburg, he never invited anyone to his family home, rarely mentioned his parents in conversation, and impatiently disclaimed kinship with another Mandelstam whose path he had crossed. He also, however, resisted the suggestion that he adopt a Russian last name, as many Jewish writers had done, so even at the beginning his vague embarrassment was balanced in part by some residual Jewish pride. The simile of the little bit of musk tends to have greater validity, with more positive implications, for the later Mandelstam, though one must be very careful not to pounce on the aphorism and use its authority to insist on a "Jewish key" to Mandelstam's achievement. Perhaps the essential point to stress here is not the debatable issue of the assertion's objective validity but simply that it had a certain psychological validity for Mandelstam. That is, he came to associate some of his most basic values and imaginative allegiances with his Jewishness, whatever may have been the actual channels through which he came to them. If Judaism had threatened the poet as an unknown womb world, it could also on occasion provide him an organizing myth for his own experience.

* English translation by Clarence Brown and Robert Hughes in *Delos 6,* 1971.

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INELUCTABLY, Mandelstam was almost everywhere perceived as a Jew in the world of Russian poetry which his achievement rapidly dominated. At the very outset, after having been taken briefly under the protection of the older Symbolist poet, Zinaida Gippius, he was tagged "Zinaida's Jew-boy," perhaps with a degree of playfulness but certainly not without an element of wry hostility. The attacks on him that began in the later 20's were often laced with anti-Semitism, and that has been true even posthumously, with certain Russian nativists recently referring to him as a "Jewish cancer" on the body of Russian poetry. The mature Mandelstam, especially in the last decade of his life, tended more and more to respond to this repeated imputation of his being a Jewish outsider by insisting on his Jewishness as a major source of his poetic vision, as his distinctive avenue of entrance into the higher European civilization. He took an avid interest in whatever he encountered of Jewish culture, his widow comments in connection with his friendship and enthusiasm for the prominent Yiddish actor and director, Mikhoels (later murdered by Stalin). As the Stalinist barbarism deepened, he appears to have identified imaginatively with historical Jewish suffering as an inspiriting model for confronting his own dire situation. Particularly revealing in this respect is the story with which he turned aside the inquiry of a GPU commandant in Voronezh in 1935 when he was challenged about his current occupation. Deprived of regular employment, he replied, he was devoting himself to the study in Spanish of the work of a certain Jewish poet who had spent years in the dungeons of the Inquisition, every day mentally composing a sonnet, released only to be imprisoned again and put in chains—whereupon he continued to compose sonnets.

Altogether, the idea of historical continuity assumed progressively greater central importance for Mandelstam, and his belonging to the preeminently history-harried, history-laden people became in this connection a dynamic element of consciousness. "His conviction," we are told in *Hope Against Hope,* "that culture, like grace, is bestowed by a process of continuity led M. to see the Mediterranean as the 'holy land.'" The Mediterranean sacred soil included for him Greece and Italy as well as Palestine, and, by a loose personal association of climate and geography, the Crimea and the Caucasus, where he traveled with his wife and wrote some of his most glowing poetry. Mme. Mandelstam herself puzzles over this professed affinity for Mediterranean culture, suggesting that it makes no particular sense for a Russian boy raised in Petersburg to imagine he had a biological bond with the Mediterranean world simply because of his Jewish parentage. The point, of course, is not that such an identification with Mediterranean values need be actually grounded in facts of heredity, only that it establish itself as a potent fact of consciousness for the poet. Though Mandelstam was an intensely Russian poet—some of his poems are so dense with allusions to earlier Russian poetry and history as to be impenetrable in any translation—he urgently needed an imaginative bridge out of his time and place, and his awareness of himself as a Jew gave him a sense of inner distance, a feeling of privileged at-homeness in the broad continuum of cultural values that went back three millennia and that was now threatened by the revolutionary reign of bureaucratized brutality. His widow's comment in *Hope Abandoned* on the presence of Jewish themes in his poetry makes perfect sense in the light of this general orientation: such poems were "not numerous—but always deeply significant."

By the end of the 1920's, the "Judaic chaos" always to be fled had given way to a sense of Jewishness as an ancient aristocratic lineage. At the beginning of "Fourth Prose"* Mandelstam reflects with satirical tartness on the assimilated bourgeois Jews of Petersburg, "descended from rabbis of patrician blood," who ended up seeking the waters of salvation at Turgenevian and Lermontovian spas. Later in "Fourth Prose," he makes a special point of assuming the stance of a Jew against the ravening pack of party-prodded hacks (Soviet "writerdom") that wanted to destroy him: "I insist that writerdom, as it has developed in Europe and above all in Russia, is incompatible with the honorable title of Jew, of which I am proud. My blood, burdened with its inheritance from sheep breeders, patriarchs, and kings, rebels against the shifty gypsyishness of the writing tribe."

Two years later, in 1931, he would explore the identification with an ancient Jewish king as a key symbol of his own poetic power in "Canzone," one of the remarkable poems in his mature style of permutated allusions. "Canzone" offers a view out across the Armenian landscape as an optical emblem of poetic vision. Armenia, the land of Ararat, and, as Mandelstam called it elsewhere, a "younger sister of Judea," merges with biblical Zion, and the sharp-eyed poet, enriched with "the Psalmist's legacy to a seer," imagines himself peering through "exquisite Zeiss/binoculars, King David's precious gift" (translation by Max Hayward in *Hope Abandoned).* These visionary lenses give a precise definition to details of the landscape, a primary intensity to color in a world where everything has ominously faded. Thus the "Mediterranean" poet, recollecting a recently visited Armenia as he writes in Moscow, dreams of fulfilling his ancient vocation by leaving the northern regions "to steep in vision destiny's finale/and say *selah* to the Chief of the Jews/ for his crimson caress."

* English translation by Clarence Brown, *Hudson Review,* Spring 1970.

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Mme. Mandelstam devotes several intriguing paragraphs to that peculiar crimson caress, connecting it with Rembrandt's painting, *The Prodigal Son,* that hangs in the Hermitage in Leningrad, in which the figure of the forgiving father is bathed in a reddish aura from his mantle. The Russian color-word, *malinovy,* we are informed in a note by Max Hayward, derives from *malina,* raspberry, and carries connotations of richness, mellowness, warmth. For our purposes, what is most important is the association of crimson with royalty in the figure of the poet-king of ancient Israel, and the fact that by identifying a rich intensity of color with the Jewish heritage Mandelstam was precisely reversing his earlier version of Judaism as faded yellow and stark black over against the polychromatic splendor of the Russian world. Instead of a chaos of origins, the Jewish past had become a vividly imaged myth of origins.

LET us keep ultimate distinctions clear. Osip Mandelstam did not believe either in Judaism or Christianity: he believed in poetry. For a time, he was inclined to associate poetry with Christianity because of his notions of Christian order and of the apparent spiritual seriousness of Christianity. Eventually, he emphasized instead the crucial historical consciousness made available to him as a poet by the fact of his being a Jew, and perhaps the Jewish stress was a more congenial one now precisely because it involved not belief but a sense of participation in a long cultural tradition. In a 1912 manifesto, "The Morning of Acmeism" (a full translation appears in Brown's critical study), Mandelstam talks about the way "a poet raises a phenomenon to its tenth power," producing a "monstrously condensed reality." And that reality, he goes on to say, "is the word as such."

As time went on, Mandelstam would enrich and complicate his conception of the reality generated by the word as such, but two decades later, in his remarkable essay on Dante, it is a conception to which he still remains faithful. Poetry, he announces at the beginning of the essay, is neither part of nature nor, in any ordinary sense of the term, an imitation of nature; "but it is something that, with astonishing independence, settles down in a new extra-spatial field of action, not so much narrating nature as acting it out by means of its instruments, which are called images." These images, of course, are cast in language, and so dynamically interact with one another in a poem in regard to their linguistic and phonetic properties as well as their visual ones. In this way Mandelstam arrives at the view that within the independent, extra-spatial field of its operation, poetic material is not referential but generated by the poem's restless exploration of its own patterns, image begetting image through the complicating reinforcements of multiple association and sound. Poetry is of course made out of human experience in this world, but it achieves its "monstrously condensed reality" through its freedom to follow its own uncannily non-discursive, asyntactical logic of images and sounds.

This doctrine of language and reality has little to do either with Judaism or Christianity, or, for that matter, with any "Judeo-Christian tradition," though the Jewish notion of inexhaustible revelation through words and their exegesis may be more congenial to such an aesthetic than the Christian idea of the Logos, the single incarnate Word. What the doctrine does reflect is Mandelstam's personal relation to the Old Testament and the New, to the corpus of Homer, Ovid, Dante, Villon, Pushkin, as luminous patterns of language. Once he could imagine for himself a connection with Judaism not through the remembered mustiness of his grandfather's house but through words—those of a Spanish poet or of the Psalmist, those of the biblical narrator telling the story of his namesake Joseph—he was free to conceive himself as a Jewish poet, custodian of Mediterranean crimsons and blues and golds in the bleakness of a northern landscape and a harsh time. Homer could as easily have been the imagined source of his legacy as David, and, indeed, there are rich and abundant allusions to Homer in his verse, but it was more natural for him to fashion his personal myth of the poetic vocation out of Psalmist and Levite because of his pressing consciousness of himself as a Jew.

The inner freedom of poetry to "condense" reality was in Mandelstam's view absolutely indispensable to civilized existence—the people needed it as they needed air, bread, and light, he would write in a late poem, "to keep them awake forever"—and it was just this freedom that a totalitarian regime could not tolerate in the least degree. Mandelstam's decision to write the "Stalin Epigram" in 1934 and to read it to a group of friends was a necessary one for him, even with the knowledge that it would probably mean his death. As his wife justly notes in *Hope Abandoned,* he needed an act of defiance like that, and like "Fourth Prose" before it, "to smash the glass cage in which he was imprisoned and regain his freedom" in order to preserve his own life-sustaining poetic voice. "You cannot write poetry in a glass cage," Mme. Mandelstam concludes, "—there is no air." There is compelling logic in his representation of Stalin in the fatal poem as a kind of mythic antitype to poetry, the implacable issuer of "words like measures of weight" which kill, who arrogates all language to his own homicidal purposes and surrounds himself with fawning retainers that can only grunt and squeal like beasts.

One senses in the magnificent poetry of the so-called Voronezh Notebooks, the poems Mandelstam wrote in his exile in the Don region, 1935-37, a paradoxical quality in the midst of

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terror that Walter Benjamin once attributed to Kafka—a radiant serenity. It is a quality, I think, that derives in great part from the ultimate faith Mandelstam placed in the abiding validity, the indispensability, of the poetic enterprise, which he was now living out, writing out, to its utmost consequences. To be sure, he was not entirely free of chill premonitions about his own imminent fate and, equally, that of mankind. There are poems, therefore, that touch an ominous note of intimated apocalypse, like the one in which he watches lines of prisoners crossing "the plains' beaten weight" and wonders whether crawling across these expanses is "the one whose name we shriek in our sleep—/the Judas of nations unborn." What is remarkable is that the apocalyptic vision should be given such a secondary emphasis in the Voronezh Notebooks. Mandelstam's poetic celebration of the here and now was never more intense, more sensuously alive, than in these poems. His private Mediterranean myth provides one imaginative source for this celebration, surfacing here and there in the explicit imagery of Cretan pottery, Greek flutes, the Italy of Dante, the yea-saying sea, and, repeatedly, the display of Mediterranean blue. More immediately, the actual Voronezh landscape is present in all its multiplex, poignant particularity—green trees "exploding" out of the muddy spring earth wreathed in milky fog, the ice-clogged canals of a jagged winter scene, a master colorist's version of Deep Saddle-Bow Mountain in yellows and reds, "raspberry and pure gold." It is easy enough to accept on the evidence of the poems alone Nadezhda Mandelstam's assertion that during the Voronezh period the couple were happy as puppies, draining every lived moment to the fullest.

The joyous intensity with which Mandelstam effects these condensations of reality as a *Dichter der irdischen Welt*—a phrase coined by Erich Auerbach to characterize Dante's acute poetic focus on the earthly realm—is perfectly complemented by the utter conviction and dignity of the poems in which the poet quietly, unaffectedly defies his persecutors.

You took away all the oceans and all the room.
You gave me my shoe-size in earth with bars
around it.
Where did it get you? Nowhere.
You left me my lips, and they shape words,
even in silence.

In the supreme imaginative clarity of these last poems, Mandelstam stands beyond ethnic origin or credal affiliations as a luminous witness for poetry itself—not its martyr but its exemplary practitioner, demonstrating the vivifying freshness of the poet's transformational play with language even under the impending darkness of the final terror. History and the literary tradition kept running through his head as he crystallized the present moment in his verse, and he may well have thought of his bond with the people that through two millennia had been left only its words, its moving lips, by its oppressors, yet with that had achieved much, and had persisted. In the engulfing cataclysm of his own era, Mandelstam could reflect on the stubborn durability of the whole broad multilingual literary tradition that had come down to him somehow unbroken through all its historical vicissitudes; and so, with the confidence of a master in his perfected craft, he could hope at the end that his poetry, too, would survive the murderous new order determined to extirpate it and all it stood for.

Mounds of human heads are wandering into the
distance.
I dwindle among them. Nobody sees me. But in
books
much loved, and in children's games I shall
rise
from the dead to say the sun is shining.

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Theater

Bright Events

Jack Richardson

SINCE most of what is to follow will be a happy report, I will begin with a short diatribe so that I will be able to sustain my present theatrical enthusiasm without having to anticipate sour qualifications. When I entered the theater in which *Candide* is playing, I was shown to a seat, or rather a stool, placed directly behind Voltaire's bed, which rested on a small platform in front of me. The actor impersonating the author of the play's source was feigning sleep while the audience found their places on, around, beside, and in between the ramps and other bits of stage that were scattered on all sides of him. I didn't mind that the stool was uncomfortable or that there was unintentional irony in the fact that Voltaire, who had so vigorously protested the presence of an audience on the stage when his plays were being performed, should find his representation surrounded by spectators who would spend as much time looking at each other as they would trying to locate the bits of scaffolding strung about the theater on which the actors sang and talked their way through a coyly energetic version of his satire.

However, after having been forced to twist, squirm, and swivel in order to see what was going on in this new version of a musical comedy of the 50's, I came to the conclusion that in fact nothing was taking place but the dissembling of verve and informal innovation, a long directorial gimmick that suited the play it had been used on only to the extent that it did force the viewer to think sometimes on his discomfort rather than on the shallow skills of the performers and the paltry imagination of that ubiquitous *homme du théâtre,* Harold Prince.

Now I am not a traditionalist who believes that audience and play have categorically prescribed relationships, among which is a certain relaxed distance between them that aids observation and private enjoyment. In my time, I have watched plays from prone, supine, and standing positions, plays that have taken place above and beneath me, at eye level, and on stages so severely raked that it seemed the actors spent more time battling gravity than the nuances of their roles. I have found what I took to be an unobtrusive, out-of-the-way viewer's chair turned into a prop for an act's denouement and myself coerced into performance. All of this is quite ordinary and acceptable when a play is created in a manner that demands it not be constrained by a proscenium or observed in relative safety.

However, when what one has come to see is a work that, if fully realized, is a light musical treatment of a famous satire on the optimism of 18th-century Christian rationalism as exemplified by the popular writings of Leibnitz, then one must wonder what perverse creative urge lies behind the attempt to turn material so perfectly suited to detached observation and enjoyment into something resembling a Washington Square hootenanny on a Sunday afternoon. The original musical version of *Candide* was an amusing, mildly intelligent piece of theater that knew its stylistic place, which rises no higher than that of good, clever operetta. The present production, with its coquetry and crudeness, is filled with misplaced movement and emphasis that betrays a low opinion both of the audience and the play, and it seemed to me to have all the pathos of a comedian forced to explain why his jokes are funny. Nevertheless, I recommend seeing *Candide,* for in its way it is a distillation of everything that can go awry when a middle-class theatrical intelligence decides to be antic and flout the conventions it is comfortable with. And as such, it is a perfect example of what is wrong with our present regnant theatrical taste, for of course *Candide* has received praise and awards enough to keep this jouncy, self-satisfied production on the boards for a long time to come.

BUT now to two bright events of the season, one of which is also an adaptation of a famous literary work and also a revival. *Ulysses in Nighttown* is for the most part an edited mounting of the thirteenth episode of Joyce's *Ulysses,* a transition helped by the fact that the nighttown scene, in which Bloom and Stephen Dedalus meet and merge in myth and paternal continuity, was written in dramatic form, so that the job of Marjorie Barkentin, who performed the adaptation, was not so much that of transformation as of selection and arrangement. The problems that Joyce presents to practical dramatic interpretation are manifest, and it is to Barkentin's credit that she managed not only to condense without butchery the section written in dramatic form, but also to weave other moments from the novel into the play with thematic sensitivity. For those who are fanatic in their reverence for Joyce and his novel of odyssey through Dublin, there is bound to be outrage at the way the book's careful verbal score is shifted about, with the result that its various dictions and modes of rhetoric, so important to the technique of Joycean narrative, are often flung together for the sake of quick exposition. For example, a snatch of Molly Bloom's famous monologue is dropped into the middle of the

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nighttown hallucinations of Bloom, and her verbal pungency is dissipated by its seeming another aspect of fantasy, another objectification in words of fretful masculine illusions and ambition, but one that is not in harmony with the rest of the scene's verbal tone.

However, those zealots who would fault the production of *Ulysses in Nighttown* because of such necessary liberties taken in the staging of Joyce's work, have their Bloomsday pilgrimages and scholia to keep them happily occupied. The rest of us can enjoy *Ulysses in Nighttown* for what it is: a robust acting out of Joycean imagery, a visual addendum that one may gratefully hold in the memory whenever he thinks about or rereads those passages of the book used in this present production.

Of course, holding Zero Mostel in one's memory is no easy task. He is a performer not inclined to accept anyone's restrictions, a presence large enough to make most roles it assumes seem only weak, secondary attributes of itself. In the heat of a bit of stage business, Mostel is capable of overflowing the balks of characterization and becoming, according to one's point of view, the celebration of pure being or the incarnation of pure *shtick*. However, the amplitude of Leopold Bloom can contain even Mostel's exuberant imagination, and his performance, while a little hesitant in its handling of Joyce's language, is a masterpiece of movement and pantomime, a corpulent, bodily objectification of the crackle, loops, and seizures of the written text. As indictments are spoken to Bloom, Mostel responds with suitable physical contortions, expressions of face and body that change as rapidly as do the adjectives in a Joycean sentence. His cringe is definitive, his invocations of pity an infinity of fawning nuance, his depictions of human appetites as hilariously and horribly graphic as a series of medieval woodcuts. Since the nighttown episode is an analogue to the Circean interval of Homer's epic, Mostel is given the chance to depict a wide range of swinish human behavior, of transformations into feral forms that match Joyce gesture for word. In fact, the best description of Mostel's performance can be found in the relevant parts of *Ulysses,* so tightly are they in correspondence, so I will stop trying to put into words what Mostel has taken out of them.

As delightful as Mostel is, he is not the entire show. Burgess Meredith must be given credit for much of the easy flow and rhythm of the production, its clean and artless evocation of all the turmoil and desire that Joyce spun out of his city's redlight district. The performance of Fionnuala Flanagan as Molly Bloom, apart from the fact that it allows one to hear Joyce spoken in the accent of the city he grew up in, was properly mixed with blowsy sensuality and human spirit, a portrait of earthy feminine endurance that made me wish for a whole evening of Molly and her thoughts. And finally I must record my admiration for Danny Meehan who, as Blazes Boylan, Molly's lover, appears from time to time to deliver the stud-swaggering line: "One rapped on a door, one tapped with a knock, did he knock Paul de Kock, with a loud proud knocker, with a cock carracarracarra cock. Cockcock." The pantomime Meehan does to this, a rose swinging at his crotch as a rakishly tilted hat, followed by shirt and pants, is removed, will always come to mind whenever I think of the man who made Bloom cuckold or the skills that made this play a joyful time.

TOM STOPPARD'S *Jumpers* is also a play about a man in quest of a spiritual home, a man of somewhat smaller dimension than Leopold Bloom, but possessed of an intelligence capable of understanding and sympathizing with the Dublin Jew's sad and fretful humanity. George Moore holds the chair of Moral Philosophy at an unspecified English university, a position which, because of the prevailing fashion of analytic and positivist philosophical method, is considered to be of as much pedagogical value as a Department of Alchemy. Throughout the course of the play, through the investigation of the murder of a colleague, a squabble on the moon between stranded astronauts, the dalliance of his wife with her psychiatrist, and a collapse of the world in general, George is engaged in putting together a paper he is to read at a meeting of the university's philosophical society. In it, he intends to refute the positivist dogma that to pretend to a knowledge of God leads at best to meaningless utterances, and at worst to a chair of moral philosophy. Against the formidable arsenal of modern linguistics, logic, and scientific method, George struggles to make a coherent case for the readmission of such predicates as "good" and "bad," "ugly" and "beautiful," into the realm of verifiable human experience. Relativism, paradox, and the ambiguities of human expression notwithstanding, George sets out to do battle against all those clever arguments that confound the human spirit, which yearns to speak about life in a manner that is made up of more than modern philosophy's categories of emotive outburst, absolute tautology, and fairly probable statement. There are things we know, George insists, whose demonstration need not be reconciled with logic. Zeno may have proved that, since an arrow in its flight is always at one point or another in an infinite series of points, it can never reach its target. However, we know, George maintains, that Saint Sebastian did not die of fright.

I will not follow the entire course of George's argument, for it does not succeed in proving goodness absolute or a God in His heaven. It does however make a poignant and very funny plea for belief in something of greater importance than the trivia modern philosophy has left us. It seems odd to George that our most sublime feelings should be reduced to a collection of relative preferences, or that a man who thinks he is a piece of roast beef is to be dealt with only as an example of minority opinion.

Of course, while Stoppard's hero is seeking a meaning for life that meets the arcane standards of his profession, the world around him, with crude empiricism, is proving itself absurd. His colleagues are depicted as acrobats, ready to per-

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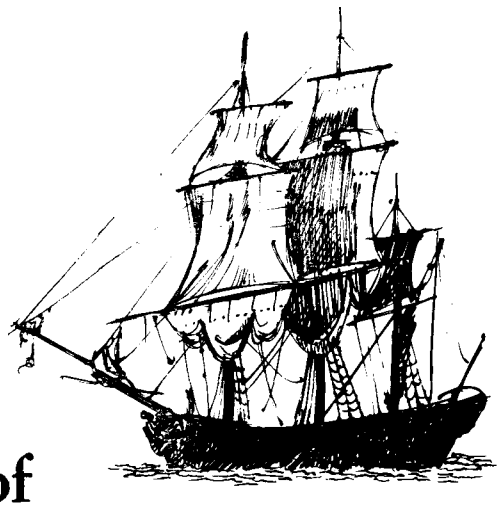

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form all sorts of complicated feats of intellectual tumbling and always landing on their feet. His wife, a once famous singer, can no longer remember the lyrics to the songs of popular romance, and her despair is being administered to by Archie Jumper, psychiatrist, university head, holder of degrees in almost every meliorist discipline, a man of infinite pragmatic tolerance, the surest path to worldly success.

Betrayed by pure reason and mocked by experience, George is doomed to defeat, but it is a defeat that Stoppard, for all of his wit and dramatic cleverness, has made quite touching. Since *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,* a play I admired but found a little too coy and dramatically forced in its darker moments, Stoppard has come closer and closer to a successful wedding of theatrical artistry and intelligence. He is already the best playwright around today, the only writer I feel who is capable of making the theater a truly formidable and civilized experience again. In George Moore he has created, with humor and familiar authority, a moving and comical attitude toward a modern intellectual dilemma, and I wish only that in place of "attitude" I might have said "character."

Brian Bedford, as always, proves what a fine art acting can be, and he succeeds in convincing us, at least for the duration of his portrayal, that George Moore does possess a dramatic as well as an intellectual humanity. Watching Bedford present the arguments and yearnings of the philosopher is to observe a man in the throes of what W. H. Auden called the "baffle of being," and it is to the actor's credit that, through precise depiction of academic mannerisms mixed with throbs of human despair, he makes out of an intelligence *in extremis* a very human substance, and thereby complements his playwright's vision. So few actors these days are capable of such creative reciprocity that it is especially worthwhile to watch someone like Bedford, someone who restores dignity to the art of collaborative effort, and often gives even more than he receives.

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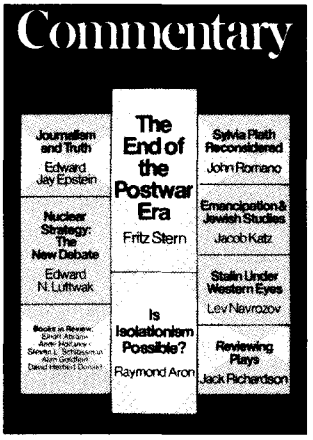

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Books in Review

Measuring Evil

OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY. By STANLEY MILGRAM. *Harper & Row. 320 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by R. J. HERRNSTEIN

WRITING in 1963 about Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem, Hannah Arendt invoked the banality of evil. Eichmann was, it seemed to Miss Arendt, a petty bureaucrat, tragically given power over the lives of thousands of helpless people. His crimes were all the more unbearable if they really expressed no particular hostility or aggression. There had been some small comfort in believing that the Nazis were inhuman, as well as inhumane, perhaps because of something amiss in the German psyche. But to think of them as a species of mere bureaucrat was disagreeable in the extreme. People prefer to believe that the evil in the world can be blamed on monsters.

Eichmann may, after all, have been a monster, not just a banal cog in a malevolent machine. The facts of his case remain in dispute. But the dilemma of individual autonomy and responsibility versus social authority transcends Eichmann or Nazi Germany. Also in 1963, a series of experiments by Stanley Milgram, then a young psychologist at Yale, was converging on the broader issue, though from a different direction. Milgram's studies of obedience to authority grew on the empirical branch of social science, rather than the speculative, polemical one. He "ran" subjects (in analogy with rats in mazes) in controlled experiments, then performed statistical tests to check his conclusions. In *Obedience to Authority*, he summarizes the experiments and the findings, and then interprets them. Because the discipline of data constrains his conclusions, they deserve a credence that Arendt's do not. You may admire Arendt's genius and either believe her or not, but data are to be believed whether or not you like them.

MILGRAM's experiments are arresting and dramatic, among the most original in all of social psychology. It is worth knowing about them in some detail. The study recruited subjects by placing an ad in a New Haven newspaper seeking "persons . . . for a study of memory." One hour's participation was to earn $4.00 plus carfare. The ad invited non-academic participants; it specifically excluded students and called for men between the ages of twenty and fifty. Hundreds of subjects, a genuine cross-section of ordinary people in New Haven in the early 1960's, ultimately served in one or another of the several procedures.

Respondents to the ads or to direct mailings would be contacted and an appointment made. When the subject arrived at the elegant Yale laboratory, he found two other men. One was the apparent experimenter, wearing a technician's coat and a suitably stern expression; the other was apparently another respondent to the ad, a pleasant, ordinary-looking middle-aged man. Actually, both men were play-acting in order to create a realistic simulation of social authority. The pseudo-experimenter was chosen and coached to look the part of a self-assured and knowledgeable scientist with the implicit authority of Yale behind him; the pseudo-subject was someone the real subject might easily have identified with, someone apparently recruited, like him, by curiosity plus $4.00.

The subject and the pseudo-subject drew lots to see which would be the teacher and which the learner in the experiment on memory. But the lots were rigged so that the subject always became the teacher. The pseudo-subject, the learner, was then led off, in one version of the procedure, to another room to be strapped into a chair. The pseudo-experimenter explained that the learner was to be taught a list of word associations, which were to be read by the subject. Moreover, explained the pseudo-experimenter, the learner was to be given an electric shock through electrodes whenever he made a mistake.

For the sake of plausibility, the pseudo-experimenter said that the shocks, though painful, "cause no permanent tissue damage." But the subject was seated before an apparatus bristling with a row of 30 switches labeled "15 volts" to "450 volts" in 15-volt steps. And, to underscore the gradations, the switches were divided into seven zones going from "slight shock" to "danger: severe shock," and then a few more switches ominously designated "XXX." The subject was told to advance the intensity of the shock by one step each time the learner erred.

There was, of course, no shock. The learner was learning nothing. He had a predetermined schedule of answers for the learning task, generously larded with mistakes for which he would then get "shocked." He also went through a prearranged routine in response to being shocked. For example, to 75 volts he grunted. To 120 volts he shouted that the shocks were becoming painful. To 150 volts he cried out to be released from the experiment. From 330 volts to 450 volts, he no longer made any sounds nor did he attempt to answer the word test.

From all reports, and from films of typical sessions, it is virtually certain that the subjects were

R.J. HERRNSTEIN, *professor of psychology at Harvard, is the author of, among other works,* IQ in the Meritocracy.

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thoroughly deceived. Each subject actually believed that he and the pseudo-subject had voluntarily come to an experiment on memory, and that sheer chance assigned them to the roles of teacher and learner. Each subject believed that he was inflicting ever-increasing punishment for the learner's errors. But for the draw of lots, the subject believed he would have been taking the shocks instead of dishing them out. The subjects showed signs of intense discomfort; almost all were in visible conflict. Their hands shook; they perspired; they laughed hysterically or pressed on grimly; they protested. In short, the experiment worked. Because it worked, Milgram has been strenuously, at times vituperatively, criticized. Later I will comment on the reaction to the research, but here it seems essential to say that Milgram took pains to explain the experiment and its purposes to each subject at the end of every session. An effort was made to prevent any subject from going away feeling that his response was abnormal or shameful. Most, if not all, of the subjects seemed satisfied, even appreciative. Many of them felt that the experience was worthwhile and educational. Whatever you decide about the morality of doing this kind of research, you should know that Milgram seems sensitive to the moral issue and to his responsibility to his subjects.

THE main result of the study was that a large fraction of the subjects went to the top of the range of shocks, even when the learner was pleading to be released. Cries that he feared a heart attack did not spare the learner. Subjects would often express reluctance about going on, but then the authority-figure, the pseudo-experimenter, would deliver a prearranged line. He would say, "The experiment requires that you continue." To a very balky subject, he might say, "You have no other choice, you *must* go on." The subject could have refused the command, and some did, but often the experimenter's stern insistence would get the subject back to work, sometimes blaming the learner for his stupidity in not performing better.

The average level of obedience depended on how close, physically, the subject was to the learner. If the learner was in the next room and only his increasingly frenzied pounding on the wall could be heard, 65 per cent of the subjects reached the top of the scale of shocks without disobeying. The other 35 per cent quit, while telling the experimenter what to do with his experiment, in more or less colorful terms. Defiance was invariably emotional. If the learner sat right next to the subject, and the subject was ordered by the experimenter to help restrain the victim, 30 per cent obeyed. Intermediate degrees of remoteness from the victim produced intermediate degrees of compliance. Other wrinkles in the basic procedure showed that obedience also depended on how plausible an authority-figure the pseudo-experimenter was, or simply whether or not he was physically present.

It is all too easy now to try to minimize the value of these findings by saying that they are obvious. Milgram protected himself against that maneuver by asking various groups of people to guess the outcome of the procedure in advance. "What would *you* do if you were a subject," he asked. And what would other people do? Every single person asked the questions confidently asserted that he, himself, would defy the experimenter, and was only slightly more realistic about the potential for evil in his fellow man. A group of psychiatrists estimated that a bit more than one person in a thousand would get to the top of the scale, the lunatic or psychopathic fringe. Where else are we to find psychiatrists off by a ratio of almost 650 to 1, for Milgram found 65 per cent obedience, not .1 per cent?

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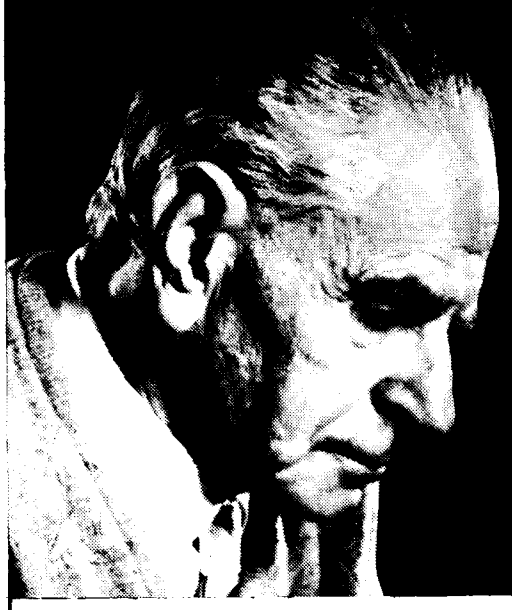

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of our ignorance. Is it only regarding this specific subject that we live in a Pollyanna pipe dream? Perhaps so, but suppose not. Suppose that, instead, the undue optimism about ourselves is characteristic of a broader set of topics than obedience to authority. While it goes beyond anything in Milgram's book to say so, it is possible that the surprise in it is yet one more rude shock we will endure as the perfectionist dogma about human society gives way to humbler, more likely correct, expectations.

No doubt about it, these experiments were a surprise, and a nasty surprise at that. The essence of a major discovery is its capacity to cause a large shift in our beliefs about some part of the world. Milgram's data show us something about the human world that we had failed to grasp before. They show us, not precisely that people are callous, but that they can slip into a frame of mind in which their actions are not entirely their own. Psychologically, it is not they alone who are flipping the switches, but also the institutional authority—the austere scientist in the laboratory coat. The authority is taken to have the right to do what he is doing, by virtue of knowledge or status. Permutations of the basic procedure made it clear that the subjects' obedience depended on a sense of passivity, and that disobedience resulted if the subject was made to feel as if he were acting on his own initiative. Ordinary people will, in fact, not easily engage in brutality on their own. But they will apparently do so if someone else is in charge.

The experiments prove decisively that ordinary people can turn into lethal instruments in the hands of an unscrupulous authority. The subjects who obeyed did not appear to be in any way atypical; they were not stupid, maladjusted, psychopathic, or immoral in usual terms. They simply did not apply the usual standards of humanity to their own conduct. Or, rather, the usual standards gave way to a more pressing imperative, the command of authority. The brutality latent in these ordinary people—in all of us—may have little to do with aggression or hostility. In fact, hostility was here the humane impulse, for when it turned on the pseudo-experimenter it was a source of disobedience. In Milgram's procedure, and in the many natural settings it more or less mimics, brutality is the awful corollary of things we rightly prize in human society, like good citizenship or personal loyalty.

MILGRAM'S work is said by some to show how close our society has come to Nazi Germany. But does it really? In Italy, Australia, South Africa, and contemporary Germany, subjects in comparable experiments have been *more*, not less, obedient. No experiment any place has yet produced a negative result to boast about. In the totalitarian countries—from Spain to China—experiments like Milgram's have not been done for they would be considered subversive, as they would indeed be. But just picture how people would behave in Spain or Albania or China, where obedience is taken far more seriously than in permissive, turbulent America. Ironically, we live in a society where disobedience, not obedience, is in vogue, contrary to the fashionable rhetoric of journalists and social commentators. Still, Milgram's American subjects mostly obeyed, and would probably do so even today, ten tumultuous years later.

The parallels to Nazi Germany, then, really say something about the quality of the authority rather than the obedience to it. A degree of obedience is the given in human society; enough of it to turn dangerous if the wrong people wield it. The political problem is how to decide who shall be the authority, for it is futile if not dangerous to hope for a society of disobeyers. Consider a contemporary case in point. Federal Judge Gesell recently accused some lawyers of a "Nuremberg mentality." They had defended their client, Egil Krogh, on the grounds that he was obeying the orders of the President, his Commander-in-Chief, when he lied under oath. The judge's view was that Krogh may indeed have been obeying orders, but he should have disobeyed. At other times, people honor their loyal and obedient citizens instead of imprisoning them, and I suspect that Judge Gesell is no different. The Judge saw it the way he did because a bitter alienation of many people from our government has fostered the illusion that obedience to authority is itself malevolent.

The illusion is palpably false, though the authority may, alas, be malevolent. There is a crucial dilemma here, one that will plague any political scheme that values both social order and individual autonomy. But the horns of the dilemma have never been so clear as they are in the light of Milgram's experiments. On one side, we find that even permissive, individualistic America creates people who can become agents of terror. As the weapons of terror become more powerful and more remote from their victims, the dangers of obedience grow. We know that bombardiers in military aircraft suffer little of the conflict and anxiety shown by Milgram's subjects, for they inflict punishment at an even greater distance and they serve an authority with greater license. That horn of the dilemma is much in the news these days. But the other horn is the penalty if we set too high a value on individual conscience and autonomy. The alternative to authority and obedience is anarchy, and history teaches that that is the surest way to chaos and, ultimately, tyranny.

Though he recognizes the alternatives, Milgram's sympathies are libertarian. He wants a more defiant citizenry, a higher percentage of disobeyers to authority. I have no doubt that it would be easy to make people more likely to say no to authority, simply by reducing the penalties for doing so. But the evidence does not suggest that people use only benevolence or moral sensitivity as the criteria for rejecting authority. Think of some real examples. Would it be greed or a higher virtue that would be the main reason for defaulting on taxes if the penalties were reduced? What deserter from the army would fail to claim it was conscience, not cowardice, once conscientious desertion became permissible? Milgram, and no doubt others, would probably an-

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swer that reducing the penalties is not enough—that people need to be taught virtue, not just relieved of the hazards of vice. That is fine, but it does not seem like cynicism to insist that the burden of proof falls on those who think they know a way to make people better than they have ever been. I find no proof in this book, or in the contemporary literature of civil disobedience. Milgram's work, brilliant as it is, resolves no dilemmas.

PSYCHOLOGY does not often spawn a finding that is neither trivial, obvious, nor false. Milgram's is the rare exception. The research is well conceived and done with care and skill, even elegance. It was both unexpected and timely, which are virtues that add up to far more than the sum of the parts. Why, then, has the work produced the poles of response? It won Milgram professional recognition and numerous honors, and it was also attacked again and again in the technical literature. The book was reviewed on the front page of the New York *Times Book Review*, an uncommon distinction for an academic work in social science, but the review was a hatchet job by a professor of literature whose distaste for social science was the main message.

Many people, besides the *Times* reviewer, do not like social science. There are so many of them that I can even sort them into categories: those who dislike it because they believe it tells us nothing they did not know and those who dislike it because it tells us something they did not want to hear. Milgram's work arouses those in the latter category, who typically insist that they belong in the former category. It is one thing to contemplate the banality of evil in the abstract, but something else to learn that the spore will germinate in New Haven at the prompting of a man in a laboratory coat. The gross discrepancy between what people predicted for the experiment and what others did as subjects is the tangible proof of the findings' power to inform us about ourselves—about our capacity for cruelty and our ignorance of the capacity.

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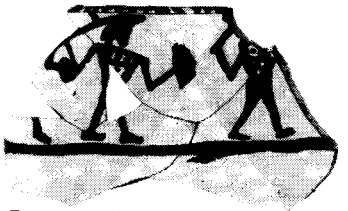

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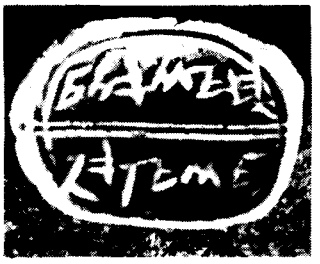

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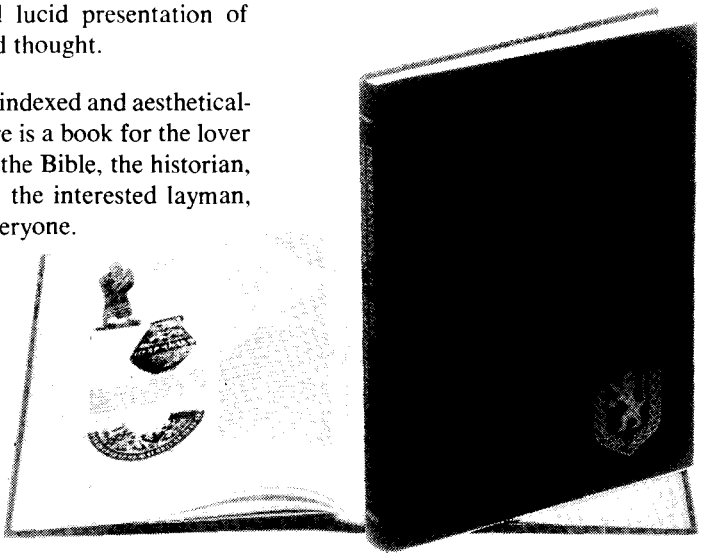

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Those who continue to insist that the experiment teaches nothing may be relying on ignorance to solve the awful dilemma of authority. It will resolve nothing, of course, but it is no surprise that Milgram's news has driven some heads into the sand.

BUT that is not the only problem with Milgram's work. Some people, often social scientists themselves, object to the element of deception, especially when it is calculated to produce acute discomfort. This seems to me a valid concern, a secondary dilemma arising from the fact of the research itself rather than from its findings. To learn how people behave under duress or danger, the researcher dissembles, for he cannot subject people to real-life hazards. If there is to be experimentation on people in social settings, there is therefore likely to be deception and manipulation. It is an unpleasant prospect, and easy to reject. But, then, consider Milgram's experiments. Deception and manipulation led to a remarkable addition to our knowledge of the perils of authority. Knowledge like that comes hard and slow. Can we afford to prohibit further discoveries of that caliber and relevance?

Some people answer the question with a dogmatic yes, setting the highest priority on individual privacy at the risk of continuing ignorance. That happens not to be my view. I value privacy but worry about ignorance. A small, temporary loss of a few people's comfort and privacy seems a bearable price for a large reduction in ignorance, but I can see, as can Milgram, how delicate a judgment this implies. Even so, I hope there are other experiments like Milgram's coming along—experiments that will teach us about ourselves, with no more than the minimum necessary deception and discomfort, elegantly and economically conducted. It should not be easy to do experiments like Milgram's —for they should not be done casually—but it should be possible, and, needless to say, the experimenter should not be held in contempt if the outcome is unexpected or uncomfortable. The goal of science is *news,* not *good* news.

The Palestine Issue

I.

THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE 1914-1918: BRITISH-JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS. By ISAIAH FRIEDMAN. *Schocken. 450 pp. $12.00.*

Reviewed by DAVID VITAL

THE triumph of 1948 turned Zionism—and Zion—from an affair of a distinct minority of Jews to the concern of all. Willy-nilly, one should perhaps add, but the change in the social and political topography of Jewry is nonetheless as near permanent as any such upheaval can produce. In contrast, the Zionists' effective ally at the laying of the cornerstone of the Third Jewish Commonwealth in 1917 proved ephemeral. The movement's special relationship with Britain, initiated under Herzl's leadership, brought to fruition during World War I, began to falter seriously almost immediately. It was delivered its body blow in 1939; by 1947, it was dead or dying. Yet such are the effects of long association on men's minds and habits, and so curiously interwoven were the threads of sentiment, principle, and ideology that bound great numbers of influential Jews in Palestine and Israel to influential (and many more less-than-influential) Englishmen in and around Westminster and Whitehall, that pockets of disbelief in its death could be observed for years thereafter—until even they, in turn, were finally rubbed out forever upon England's cold response to Israel's situation in the October 1973 war.

Today, in retrospect, the more carefully one looks at that brief, soon-bitter alignment of British imperialists with the men who claimed—with much justice but little authority—to speak for the Jewish people, the odder it seems. And the more sinister the carefully ambiguous language of the Balfour Declaration in which the alignment was proclaimed to all the world now appears. And, lastly, the more pitiful now seem all those, with Weizmann at their head, to whom the special relationship with Britain was not simply the best lever at hand to inch the Zionist cause forward, but the rock on which Israel had to be constructed and the decisive and irreplaceable factor in Zionist policy, to ignore or belittle which was to risk catastrophe. There is, in a word, a great deal to explain.

The importance of Isaiah Friedman's book lies in the fact that he is the first academic historian to try to deal with the matter in full. He has tried, in other words, to trace the entire network of British policy and British diplomacy during World War I insofar as it could then (and can now) be accounted relevant to the particular outcome on Palestine—namely, the Balfour Declaration and the institution of British political and military control of that country. Since the war itself drove the makers of decisions, along with the cohorts of advisers and asssitants who surrounded them, to break down the bureaucratic and conceptual compartments in which external policy had been traditionally devised and executed, and to see, or at any rate to seek, an underlying unity of purpose in all the affairs of the greatest empire of the day, the author's task was a formidable one. For to the myriad interconnections which the thoughtful historian discovers for himself there are added the almost infinitely complex crisscross patterns of communication, consultation, and influence which underlie every act of state like the proverbial mass of the iceberg below the waterline. Much of this, the inevitable detritus of decision-making, is preserved on paper, and vast quantities of paper at that; and much, if not all, of this paper has evidently been read, absorbed, and then incorporated either explicitly or implicitly into the present book. The result is a fairly straightforward exercise in diplomatic history, a meticulous (one is, pardonably, tempted to say overmeticulous) piece of work.

Under Dr. Friedman's magnifying glass the old myths about Weizmann as the singleminded and virtually singlehanded begetter of the

DAVID VITAL is *professor of political science at the University of Haifa. Mr. Vital contributed "Israel After the War: The Need for Political Change" to our March issue.*

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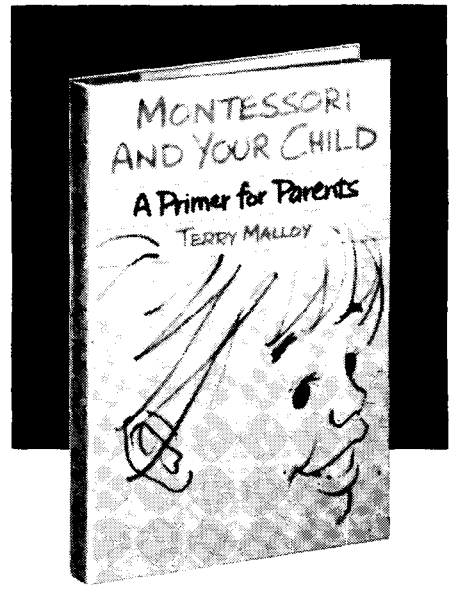
Declaration duly vanish, while the crucial (if unwitting) role of the French is rendered plain as day. On the one hand, it was by adopting Zionist purposes as their own that the British were able to provide themselves with an argument for keeping Palestine ("the military gate to Egypt," Curzon called it) for themselves, which is to say out of the French sphere. On the other hand, by their own statement in June 1917 in support of "the renaissance of Jewish nationality in that land from which the people of Israel were exiled so many centuries ago" the French themselves greatly helped to establish Zionist respectability and to edge the British forward to the day of the declaration.

Then we are given a proper perspective in which to see British considerations relative to American Jewry and the slow replacement of hostility to English Jewry for the pro-German sentiments of their brothers in the United States with a move to win their support. And so with Russian Jewry, whose hostility to the Czar's regime spilled over as disinterest in the pursuit of the war, and, in the event, was instantly reversed by the Balfour Declaration to the great satisfaction of the Foreign Office in London. Virtually all of the gigantic cast of characters who played—or seemed to play—a role in the slow and uncertain slide of the British into public support for the Jews figure in Dr. Friedman's book: Sir Reginald Hall in the Admiralty, Clayton, Sykes, Wingate, Milner, Ormsby-Gore, and the rest, down to the young Harold Nicolson, emerging as a minor writer of Foreign Office minutes with a word of his own to say on the subject from time to time. Above these, the major figures: Balfour, of course, and Lloyd George. These and dozens upon dozens of others who at one time or another, in St. Petersburg or Washington, in Cairo, in offices in Whitehall and the clubs of Pall Mall, each with his bright idea or comment, his memorandum, his objection, and, in the end, in most cases, his bland acceptance of the extraordinary idea of an alignment with the Jews—some of the Jews at any rate—as politic.

Why extraordinary? Because, in the first place, England was never a country in which the Jewish presence was sufficiently large and significant to make Jewish purposes and Jewish opinion a matter of lasting, direct, and internal political concern to a British government—in the way that the Jewish community was (and still is) thought a factor to be reckoned with (and squashed) in Russia and was looked upon rather more benevolently, say, in contemporary Austria-Hungary. Besides, the most forceful opposition to the Declaration and to the moves leading up to it came from within British Jewry; and the proof of the diplomatic purity, so to speak, of British purposes can be seen in the relative ease with which the government rode over it. But in terms of external policy, too, the decision to proclaim Britain's patronage of the Zionist cause did not stem directly from an intrinsic British need; still less did it embody a clear and authentic British desideratum. Rather, all was founded on a structure of calculation. The purposes behind the policy were instrumental; and they had to be set out and argued in detail, and the arguments repeated, with suitable modifications, over a very long period. The arguments used within the British establishment were not identical with those used by Weizmann, Sokolov, Jabotinsky, and many others in trying to storm it. But each set influenced the others; and because the Zionists were not British civil servants it was what they had to say that became better known.

In the circumstances, it is entirely understandable that the whole affair came to be seen as a triumph of Zionist, notably Weizmann's, diplomacy. But it was not. Once the British government had been made aware of Zionism, or, if one prefers, reminded of it, the machine ground on unaided in its cumbersome way with astonishingly little help. Which explains, as Dr. Friedman shows, how it came about that the Zionists in London were so modest in their demands, well beyond what the situation required.

The second curious aspect about Britain's pro-Zionist policy is that once it had been announced, it had served its purpose and the grounds for its adoption evaporated. With



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Russia's retirement from the war, the war's end, and the signing of the peace treaties the essential rationale behind the move was lost. There remained only the promise; and for reasons which lie beyond the scope of Dr. Friedman's book, it was a promise singularly difficult to break, even for so experienced a set of statesmen and diplomats as inter-war Britain was provided with.

There *could* have been a direct and continuing pro-Zionist policy based upon interest, rather than upon a wartime undertaking. There were some who propagated ideas like the incorporation of a Jewish state into the British Empire as a "dominion" and a "reliable," perpetual ally (as opposed to the "unreliable" Arabs). But official thinking on such lines was never more than halfhearted, let alone put forward seriously as a basis for practical politics. The Jewish National Home in Palestine rapidly became—at any rate in the minds of the British—an albatross around the government's neck until, with anger and relief, it was cast off in 1947. Which is all the more reason why the story of how it came to hang there is of unending fascination.

2.

THERE COULD HAVE BEEN PEACE: THE UNTOLD STORY OF WHY WE FAILED IN PALESTINE AND AGAIN WITH ISRAEL. By JON KIMCHE. *Dial. 359 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

FOR Jon Kimche, the recognized *enfant terrible* of Zionist journalism, this book is par for the course. Actually this is not a book at all but rather that publishers' nightmare, a collection of essays. Immune as they are to truth-in-packaging laws, publishers use "link pieces" and padding to make a marketable book out of odd bits and pieces. In this case, the padding content is about average but the link device is particularly transparent: under the coy heading of "interlude," a bare chronology of the years 1923-67 is used to connect a longish piece on the diplomatic history of the origins of the British Mandate with a journalistic account of the post-1967 years. Like others, Mr. Kimche is a victim of the Arab attack of October 6, 1973: the war has invalidated some of his crucial assumptions. Hanging somewhere between the two long pieces, there is a short one on Middle East oil. Crises can be very educational, and what he has to tell us about oil has long since been covered *ad nauseam* by the daily press. There is already a vast literature on the Balfour Declaration and the formation of the Mandate, and Mr. Kimche has little to tell us that is new. From his characteristically provocative title, one might expect an angry indictment of Zionist policy, both old and new—as well as an exposé of Chaim Weizmann's motives—but Mr. Kimche's hit-and-run raid on diplomatic history does neither. Instead we get a medium-good account of how the British set out to negotiate an agreed settlement with Arabs, Jews, and the French, to whom contradictory promises had been made during the war. Failing to conciliate the rival claims of leaders whose support they no longer needed now that both Turks and Germans were defeated, the British naturally settled down to negotiate among themselves, using Arabs and Jews as puppets to deploy against each other. The real actors were all British, the Foreign Office, the colonial administrations of India and Sudan, the Cairo-based "Arab Bureau" (a classical political "ops" intelligence outfit: T. E. Lawrence was one of the operatives),* and finally the Cabinet in London, which acted as the stage manager and lead player.

One reason why farce became tragedy was that the British showed a fatal propensity to misjudge their puppets. For their King (of the united Arabia that never was) they picked Faisal, son of the Sharif of Mecca. They thought that Faisal was a stable and moderate man, genuinely interested in reaching a *modus vivendi* with the French, who wanted Syria, and the Jews, who wanted Palestine, or at least a good share of it. Some of the British also persuaded themselves that Faisal would have widespread support in the Arab world. In fact, Faisal turned out to represent no one in particular except his family's retainers, and he was dominated by a passion for pointless and destructive intrigue. Thus the British backed the wrong horse and went on doing so for three decades—first installing Faisal as King in Syria, and when the French booted him out, as King of Iraq, where Faisal used to invite English ladies for tea while his men were busy killing off tribal and ethnic enemies.

One of the British actors, the "Indian" government in colonial Delhi, never did like Faisal and his ilk, preferring to back Ibn Saud (father of the present Faisal), who was then a tribal chieftain in northeast Arabia. In a manner quite typical of British policy in the Middle East, whose impenetrable muddle Arabs and Jews usually misconstrued as devilish intrigue, Ibn Saud was backed by the British who were running India while Faisal was supported by the British who were running Egypt. Ibn Saud won, completing the conquest of much of Arabia in 1926, and generously giving the family name to his conquests. The present Faisal, whose bogus claims to the holy places are being taken seriously nowadays, has no ancestral rights over Mecca or Medina, let alone Jerusalem, where the Saudis have never figured at all. Actually both Shell and BP have more hallowed and ancient rights in Arabia than the Saudi family, which was a little-known clan fifty years ago.

ANOTHER fatal misjudgment was the appointment of Haj Amin el-Husseini as Mufti of Jerusalem. The British thought that they were elevating a valid representative of Arab-Moslem opinion with whom they could do business. Instead of which their action gave official recognition to the leading organizer of agitation and terrorism on the Arab side, undermined moderate Arab leaders, and created an incubus that haunted the Mandate till the very end. To Amin el-

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK *is visiting professorial lecturer at Johns Hopkins and the author of, most recently,* US-USSR Nuclear Weapons Balance.

* See also James R. Adams's review, beginning on p. 91.—Ed.

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Husseini goes the distinction of having transformed the natural Arab hostility toward pioneering Zionism (which was seen as a threat from the very beginning) into a European-style anti-Semitism that was until then quite rare in the Middle East: one of his slogans was, "All Jews are Zionists." Characteristically, it was under his aegis that European anti-Semitic literature began to circulate in Palestine, including the inevitable *Protocols,* and it was the Mufti who organized the first *fedayeen* terrorist bands, thirty years before Nasser followed in his footsteps.

It is recognized that the present conflict is a lineal descendant of the wreckage of the British Mandate, but it is also pretty clear that an independent Jewish state could not possibly have arisen without conflict. As Mr. Kimche's account involuntarily shows yet again, the only Jewish presence that Arab leaders were willing to accept was a clearly subordinate and indeed submissive community, on the model of the Turkish Millet system of ethnic subjugation. What the Jews needed the Arabs would not concede; what the Arabs were willing to grant the Jews did not need: better to live as a free man in New York than as a Moslem-protected person in an Arab Palestine. There was thus no missed opportunity: there *could* have been peace "with Palestine" but not with a Jewish state in being.

HAVING failed to press his advertised case in the first essay, Mr. Kimche does have some harsh things to say about post-1967 Israeli policy, but nothing quite so harsh as blaming Israel for the failure to make peace. Mr. Kimche can hardly forget—as some publicists seem to do—that it takes at least two to make peace, and in this conflict one would really need four, including the inchoate Palestinians and the compulsively militant Syrians.

Like others who attempt to go behind the scenes without real access to the men and the documents, Mr. Kimche relies on "private communications" for much of his information. What is one to make of Mr. Kimche's personal version of one of Sadat's secret briefings to Cairo editors? Or of the various "documents" that are footnoted as "letters to J.K." with no sender named? We may not trust Mr. Kimche, but at least he exists and is a known quantity, unlike his anonymous informants. In covering the age of Henry Kissinger future historians will be in bad shape anyway, since one will never know what actually happened, only what was written down after the fact by civil servants who were probably never told what was actually agreed upon at all those secret face-to-face meetings. But at least one may begin to establish *some* of the facts with the documents, and this one cannot do by relying on secret informants and anonymous letters.

In any case, as Dr. Kissinger may discover to our universal regret, in the Middle East exciting secret meetings and quick verbal agreements may simply come to nothing, as they have invariably done in the past: Golda Meir was traveling incognito to meet King Abdullah of Jordan (Hussein's grandfather) when Dr. Kissinger was still going to college. Those escapades never produced tangible results and for a reason that is still valid: so long as any substantial body of Arab opinion wants to continue the conflict, no general peace will be possible. Only tactical accommodations produced by military realities are possible, and these can be very important: Lebanon was a dangerous antagonist for Israel in 1948 but stayed out of the fighting thereafter; Jordan was a major threat in 1967, but could no longer take the heat in 1973. If there is another war, Egypt may be the next one to stay out. Who says that wars never settle anything?

3.

BATTLEGROUND: FACT AND FANTASY IN PALESTINE. By SAMUEL KATZ. *Bantam. 271 pp. $1.50.*

Reviewed by JAMES R. ADAMS

THIS book has little to do with military strategy or tactics, yet Mr. Katz has given it an appropri-

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JAMES R. ADAMS *is on the staff of the* Wall Street Journal.

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ate title. He is dealing with the battle over the founding of the Jewish state in Palestine that took place in books, pamphlets, articles, every resource of the written and spoken word. He deals with this battle not as a scholar, but as a vigorous, if unofficial, participant. He writes from the perspective of an old Irgun hand (he was high in the command of Menahem Begin's terrorist underground organization in 1947 and 1948), who has latterly been a leader of the expansionist Land of Israel Movement. Mr. Katz has a crisp, lucid style, erupting occasionally into tirades or panegyrics, and he covers a lot of ground. But his book, basically, is an essay in propaganda.

The propaganda of the Arab-Israeli conflict is particularly rich in historical reference, but in this respect, at least, Mr. Katz stands out. He picks up his story with the end of the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E. and makes his most valuable contribution in discussing the Jewish presence in Palestine between the time of the Roman Emperor Hadrian and the British Lord Balfour. It was, he says, a continuous presence, and he provides satisfactory documentation. Along the way Mr. Katz also includes some fascinating and not widely accessible material on Christian "proto-Zionists" of the early 19th century, among them English religious enthusiasts like Lord Shaftesbury and Laurence Oliphant, who actively proposed Jewish resettlement in Palestine (for decidedly non-Jewish reasons) and even worked up a number of moderately reasonable programs. This school of thought deserves greater study as an antecedent to the Balfour Declaration and to a certain strand of British pro-Zionism.

Some of Mr. Katz's more contemporary points deserve notice as well. His particular line of argument concerning the Palestine refugees, for instance, may well come to the fore at future stages of the Geneva peace conference on the Middle East. Mr. Katz contends that the number of those who fled Israel in 1948 has been grossly overestimated by anti-Israel propaganda and United Nations incompetence. Instead of the "nearly three-quarters of a million" estimated by a recent pamphlet of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) or the million-and-a-half or two million claimed by some Arab spokesmen, the true figure, he claims, is about 420,000. Mr. Katz derives this estimate by subtracting the number of Arabs living in post-1948 Israel from selected pre-war census figures (probably outdated by 1948). His results are somewhat lower than Israel's own—recent Foreign Ministry literature puts the number of 1948 Arab refugees around 500,000; but this is of course still in the same ballpark.

Even though Mr. Katz's figures can be quarreled with, his argument appears plausible. Many more impartial observers than he believe that the original UN refugee rolls were inflated by impoverished non-refugees who flocked to UNRWA's free rations and services. Something similar goes on today in the Beirut "camps," where indigents of many other ethnic groups also take shelter. UNRWA itself acknowledges that its registration records "do not necessarily reflect the actual refugee population owing to factors such as unreported deaths, false registrations, or undetected absence from the area of UNRWA operations" (*Report of the Commissioner-General*, 1 July 1971-30 June 1972). With an eye to Arab spokesmen at the UN, UNRWA also suggests that many more Palestinians may have relocated from Palestine who do not appear on the UNRWA rolls.

This entire discussion may seem merely academic, or even distasteful, but it could become relevant if and when the Geneva conference takes up the question of compensation for the Palestinians. Mr. Katz points to the 900,000 Jews who fled Arab countries after 1948, of whom nearly 750,000 took refuge in Israel. Almost all their property was expropriated by Arab governments. If their claim were balanced against the Palestinian, as Abba Eban seemed to suggest it should be in his opening speech at Geneva, the slate might pretty much be wiped clean.

So far, Mr. Katz's points resemble those made by Israel's official propaganda (and invoke much the same evidence). But he has his own message to deliver, and his idiosyncratic approach becomes evident when he broaches his major theme: British responsibility for the Arab-Israeli conflict. Mr. Katz is obsessed with the idea that British ambitions in the Middle East were the product of the Cairo-based "Arab Bureau" during World War I—the intelligence unit best known for its junior member, T. E. Lawrence, and for its patronage of the "Arab revolt." The "Cairo School," Mr. Katz explains, envisaged a loose federation of semi-independent Arab states in historic Arab territory, to be protected and presided over by the British. But, he says, plans for a homogeneous Arab Fertile Crescent were frustrated by the Balfour Declaration and the French claims in Syria. The disciples of the "Cairo School" nevertheless set about to "diddle the French out of Syria" and to undermine the Jewish National Home. The weapon, he maintains, was the debatable claim that Britain had made a series of promises to the leaders of the Arab revolt which were then reneged on by the terms of the Balfour Declaration. Cairo veterans in the Mandate government spurred Palestinian Arabs to riot and rebellion against Zionist settlers, in effect creating a nationalist "movement" (Katz's quotation marks) out of whole cloth. By inflaming this issue, the British also hit on a means for creating a "framework of cooperation" in the larger Arab world—i.e., the Arab League—of which they had always dreamed. This line of "Laurentian pan-Arabism" was supposed to culminate in 1948, when the united Arab states were to occupy Palestine with the covert assistance of the British.

Or so says Mr. Katz.

Now, one can agree that the British occasionally pursued a muddle-headed "pan-Arab" policy (especially in the early 40's) or that the Mandate administration's idea of its duties differed vastly from the program of the Zionist Revisionists. And certainly a Laurentian myth exists; a pro-Arab pamphlet circulated as recently as the October 1973 war argued that "Britain had pledged complete independence for all Arab countries

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in return for Arab support when [World War I] ended and that this promise was not honored. . . ." But the story Mr. Katz tells is not only sloppy and distorted history, it is sloppy propaganda. Mr. Katz goes to great lengths to discredit Lawrence, when Lawrence himself is one of the strongest witnesses *against* the "Laurentian myth."

Lawrence did indeed adopt a well-publicized posture of disgust with British policy. What is less well known is that in doing so he was objecting not to the Balfour Declaration but to Britain's abandoning of King Faisal ibn Hussein's government in Syria to the French. (This story is told, fully documented, in *The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia,* by Phillip Knightley and Colin Simpson, 1969.) He wrote, shortly after, that Britain had fully satisfied its obligations to the Arabs when Sir Winston Churchill, at the Cairo Conference of 1921, installed Faisal in Iraq. As far as the Palestine Mandate goes, Lawrence can only be described as a Zionist sympathizer. He acted as interpreter at the famous meeting between Faisal and Dr. Chaim Weizmann, became a great admirer of the Zionist leader, and subsequently wrote to a vociferously anti-Zionist Anglican divine in Jerusalem that he (the divine) was not fit to black Weizmann's boots.

IF THE "Cairo School" encompassed a wider variety of outlook than Mr. Katz allows, so did British policy toward the Balfour Declaration. The officer in the field worried about the effect of the Declaration on local Arab opinion, a worry attested to by dispatches in the *Arab Bulletin,* the weekly intelligence summary of the Arab Bureau. A "Palestine Letter" in the March 18, 1918 *Bulletin,* for instance, noted: "There is no doubt nothing hampers so greatly our local relations with the existing non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, as the vagueness of our declaration in favor of Zionism. It is idle to suppose that any one in possession can feel at his ease in a Promised Land!" On April 2, the same correspondent stated an interpretation which he apparently felt would mollify local Arab concerns:

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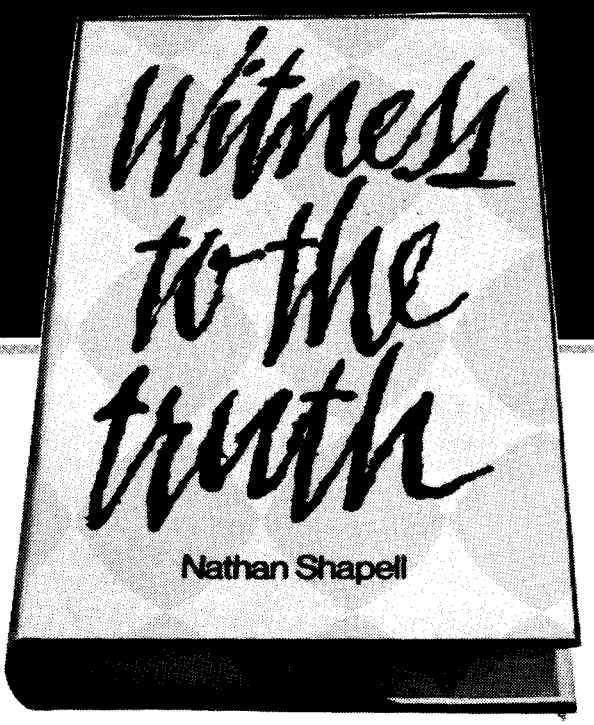

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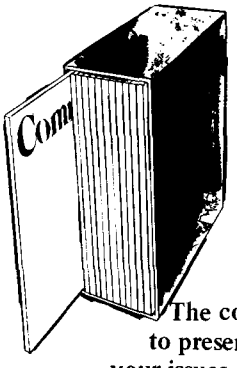

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With the arrival of the Zionist Commission, of which an advance party is already in Palestine, it is to be expected that Arab apprehension will become acute: and it is hoped no time will be lost in making known as widely as possible the real policy of the Commission, which is understood to be opposed both to expropriation or exploitation of existing land owners, and also to any Jewish control of Palestine. For the very moderate number of Jews, expected to desire to settle there, it is considered that the almost derelict crown lands, and unappropriated marshy and sandy areas will provide ample scope.

If this was the reality in Palestine, as Arab Bureau personnel saw it shortly after the British conquest, it did not contradict the expectations of some British policymakers in the debates prior to the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. Lord Curzon, a member of the Inner War Cabinet and postwar Foreign Secretary, wrote a memo two weeks before the Declaration doubting the practicality of massive Jewish resettlement in the "National Home," on financial and economic grounds, and pointing to difficulties with native Arabs and religious interests in Jerusalem. The British version of Zionism, he wrote, "is a policy very widely removed from the romantic and idealistic aspirations of many of the Zionist leaders whose literature I have studied, and, whatever it does, it will not in my judgment provide either a national, material, or even a spiritual home for any more than a very small section of the Jewish people." This basic misunderstanding of Zionist aims contained the seeds of thirty years of British troubles, especially as events in Central Europe gave an impetus to Jewish immigration that nobody could have foreseen.

Mr. Katz, convinced of British perfidy to the end, gives little weight to this fatal flaw in British policy. Furthermore, he misinterprets the persistent in-fighting among the British bureaucracy that complicated Palestine policy, let alone the "Arab revolt" itself. The most intense opposition to the Balfour Declaration came not from the Arab Bureau or its superiors in the Foreign Office but from the "ultra-Islamic" India Office, worried about Moslem opinion in its own domain. The conflict between the Foreign Office and the India Office grew so intense that each wound up supplying, and arming, an opposing side in the bloody feud between the Hashemites and Ibn Saud. Mr. Katz passes over all this and a great deal more, and in the end he proves very little about the "Cairo School" or "Laurentian pan-Arabism," slogans that serve only to twist thirty years of muddled British policy into the framework of his *idée fixe*.

This *idée fixe* consists mainly of an inordinate hatred of the British, one that prevents Mr. Katz from facing a number of harsh, unpleasant, but almost certainly true propositions: for instance, that Palestinian Arab hostility toward Zionism ran deep, even at the beginning; that British concessions to the Arabs, seen by the *Yishuv* as anti-Jewish, were in some part attempts at a fair-minded balance, in line with original British policy under the Mandate; that today's Palestinian nationalism is a real, if incoherent, phenomenon, not an invention of British colonialism and Arab aggression. Mr. Katz's book, in its refusal to consider alternatives, will not help to promote the clarity of thought absolutely necessary in this period of dangerous negotiation and momentous compromise.

Re-creation

THE WONDER-WORKER. By DAN JACOBSON. *Atlantic-Little, Brown. 191 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by JOHANNA KAPLAN

DAN JACOBSON'S new novel *The Wonder-Worker* is a highly unusual, exhilarating book, and in a subtle, understated way ultimately so radical that it is at first difficult to connect with the author's previous works. Jacobson, a South African who has lived in England for many years, is the author of several novels, among them *The Be-*

JOHANNA KAPLAN *is the author of* Other People's Lives, *a collection of stories to be published next year by Knopf.*

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ginners and *The Rape of Tamar*, but he is probably best known in this country for his short stories which have appeared over the years in COMMENTARY and other magazines and are collected in the two volumes *The Zulu and the Zeide* and *Through the Wilderness*. Most of Jacobson's stories are about South Africans, particularly South African Jews, who live in such a troubled, ambiguous relation to the larger society that their visceral apprehension of danger is too overwhelming to be articulated. Toward the blacks, whom they guiltily employ and exploit, Jacobson's characters feel a truculent, helpless shame; toward the Dutch Afrikaaners, they feel a wary, frightened disdain; and toward the English South Africans—the part of the population with whom they are most closely associated—they seem envious, eager to be liked, and eager to be like them. It is in each case a hopeless proposition, as Jacobson's stories demonstrate. Immigrants from the *shtetlach* of Russia and Lithuania, Jacobson's "beginners" brought with them the sad baggage of superstition and legitimate fear, and their remarkable, unexpected success in a raw, threatening unsettled land only reinforced the terrible, familiar conviction that the known may be bad enough, but it is at least *known*. Of course, South Africa is hardly a place where intimations of dread can be thought of as paranoid; still, the rules and conventions accepted by the Jewish middle class represented here seem exceptionally rigid, the possibilities correspondingly limited, and the punishments disproportionately dire.

Such a sense of harshness and constriction is in great contrast both to the feeling that Jacobson conveys of the land itself—vast, open, and surprisingly beautiful—and his tone as a storyteller. His manner is direct, casual, and deceptively simple. It's as if Jacobson were taking the reader out for a pleasant, ambling narrative stroll, and he is so deft that it often seems as if he were merely the medium, the vessel for the story being recounted. Still, these are largely stories of youth, of reminiscence, of a time and place to which the author-narrator cannot or will not return. Probably no writer can go on endlessly using the material of his youth, but it is bound to become a sharper, more immediate dilemma for someone cut off from the ongoing life of the country where he grew up. Jacobson perceives this with particular incisiveness and poignance in the story "Fresh Fields." In this story, the narrator, a young South African writer, comes to live in England, thus fulfilling his lifelong dream, and as if it were a part of that dream he meets the single older South African writer he has always admired. The old poet, now irrevocably tied to his life in England, is bitter, dried-up: he cannot write any more, and brusquely advises the young man to go back to his roots, return to South Africa. As their strange and strained acquaintance proceeds, the elderly distinguished writer begins to steal the young man's material—unpublished stories that had been sent to him—and ultimately, in an odd, complicitous move, the young narrator-protagonist, enraged but comprehending, gives up to the old man all his unpublished manuscripts and notes, saying, "I don't want to be like you. I don't want to go home. . . . I'll take my chance right here, where I am. It's my only hope."

It seems crazily reckless, this giving away of one's youth, but is probably both brave and necessary, and on the evidence of *The Wonder-Worker*, Jacobson was right to take the chance. There is a special risk involved, though: for in giving up the subject matter of his early work, Jacobson also gave up its characteristic tone. He has had to find an entirely different voice and mode. This mode is already present in *The Rape of Tamar*, Jacobson's retelling of the brief biblical account of Tamar's rape by her half-brother, Amnon. Jacobson seems essentially interested in the issues of power and political intrigue, but because the story is told through the voice of Yonadab (in the Bible a minor figure, and in Jacobson's midrash a master politician), it is Yonadab's speculative re-creating of a specific event that comes to assume primary importance.

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how is something—an event, a life, a world—created, re-created, actually imagined, emerges as Jacobson's real concern in *The Wonder-Worker*. It is what the novel is about, and it is, in the highest sense, terrifying. Timothy Fogel, whose story is being told by a nameless narrator, is born, heralded by peculiar signs and portents, to a German-Jewish refugee father and a half-witted Irish mother. His father is a third-rate commercial artist, his mother a shop assistant, and Timothy grows up in the pinched, shabby gentility of lower-middle-class London, always an outsider. He is both by temperament an alien, and in fact the child of aliens. Very early in life, he becomes preoccupied with a neighboring "ordinary" family, the Sendins, whose daughter, Susie, he falls obsessively in love with at the age of four, and whose son, Laurence, he ambivalently befriends. He is rejected by the Sendins, unattended to by his parents, and cast out, by choice or by nature, from all ordinary nurturing social relations. His existence is relieved and redeemed by his unusual way of perceiving his surroundings, and more dramatically, by the discovery that he has miraculous, supernatural powers: he can transform himself at will into any material substance he desires. Or so it seems. For in this book, nothing is as it seems, because Timothy Fogel is not really Jacobson's protagonist; instead he is the created protagonist of the strange nameless narrator who is telling this story, perhaps even writing it down, from the confines of a bizarre and elegant Swiss sanitarium. In alternating chapters, the reader gradually puts together more about the past life of Timothy and about the present sanitarium life of the nameless narrator, who is engaged in creating his vision of a life—possibly his own, more likely his own transformed.

There are very few easily arrived at certainties in this novel, but since one of them is that the narrator is psychotic, *The Wonder-Worker* can be read as a sort of psychotic's journal. It seems to me that this mistakes its essential, if somewhat eerily elusive, nature. It is a book about creativity and perception, about the act of imaginative transformation. If the characters often seem somewhat attenuated, it is because they are really secondary to Jacobson's purpose. The substance of the novel is the working out of the creative process itself, and in order to achieve his end, Jacobson has relied on language. The voice is spare, hard, brilliant, and though it is often exquisitely lyrical, it is never lush. It is always precise, and precisely dizzying: Jacobson is leading us, forcing us into that peculiar, unsafe region of the mind where out of memories, dreams, simple fragments of observation and inexplicable distortion, something new, something other than ordinarily recalled or observed reality, is born as a separate entity, achieving its own necessarily mysterious integrity. It is true that both art and psychosis transform experience, but as this book succeeds in demonstrating, only one endures.

War and Literature

THE UNWRITTEN WAR: AMERICAN WRITERS AND THE CIVIL WAR. By DANIEL AARON. *Knopf. 401 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by JOHN W. ALDRIDGE

DANIEL AARON has written a book about the impact of the Civil War on American writers in order to demonstrate the perfectly valid thesis that the war actually had very little impact on American writers. Such an undertaking necessarily involves some complicated intellectual footwork, since to make out any kind of case one is obliged to start from the assumption that the war should have received important literary treatment, and then proceed to discuss the many writers who either could not or preferred not to deal with it at all, others who touched on it only peripherally, and still others who tried to make full-scale use of it but did so in fiction or poetry that, for the most part, can only be considered third-rate. Mr. Aaron's argument, in short, requires him to fabricate a historically dubious expectation as to the effect a major war should have on literature and then to concentrate on instances of negative performance, of the failure of various writers to measure up to the expectation.

This not only places him in continuous dialectical jeopardy, but engenders a quality of monotone and bleakness that pervades his study and finally deadens the effect of even his best perceptions. The examination of the influence on literature of any historical event is difficult enough, but the examination of the influence an event largely *did not have* on literature requires the genius of a Flaubert to bring off. He at least just might have succeeded in his ambition to write a book about nothing.

Another of Mr. Aaron's problems is that Edmund Wilson explored much the same material with far greater thoroughness and sensitivity in *Patriotic Gore,* and he did so without imposing on himself the constraints that so severely hamper Mr. Aaron. Wilson was not interested solely in the extent to which the war figured as the subject matter of imaginative literature or whether it inspired an epic novel or poem, but rather in the overall literary achievement of the wartime and immediately postwar years. He shared Mr. Aaron's view that the period was not one in which belles-lettres flourished. But instead of allowing the fact to trouble him, he proceeded to examine what the period *did* produce and tried to put into the perspective of the war particularly the many examples of those other literary forms—the diaries, memoirs, speeches, letters, and journalistic accounts—which might be said to have flourished.

Mr. Aaron pays his respects to *Patriotic Gore* and has obviously learned from it, yet he also has serious reservations about some of Wilson's judgments and finds him, on the whole, too perverse and speculative to be an altogether trustworthy guide. One feels, in fact, that it may have been partly because of these reservations that Mr. Aaron felt justified in undertaking his own study of the sub-

JOHN W. ALDRIDGE, *professor of English at the University of Michigan, is the author of* After the Lost Generation, In Search of Heresy, In the Country of the Young, *and most recently,* The Devil in the Fire.

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ject. Nevertheless, the authority of *Patriotic Gore* is massively present in the world of Civil War literary scholarship and, unavoidably, it has had its influence on Mr. Aaron's manner of engaging his materials. It is almost as if Mr. Aaron were writing with such an acute consciousness of what Wilson had already said, and said so well, that he chose to omit or pass lightly over certain areas of discussion rather than risk intruding on Wilson's territory. Wilson was a prodigious, perhaps an excessive, quoter and citer of cases, and he was also an extraordinary stylist. Mr. Aaron quotes scarcely at all and buries his citations in footnotes that are almost always livelier and more to the point than his text. His style, moreover, is as lackluster as his conception of his subject and the result is a book large in size but thin in substance.

MR. AARON'S method is to offer us a catalogue of American writers from Emerson to Faulkner, each of whom is characterized on the basis of his or her relation to the Civil War. There is a good deal of sheerly informational value in some of these studies, particularly in those of the older New England writers and of James, Adams, Twain, and Howells who, unlike Emerson, Longfellow, and Whittier, seem to have had something more than a theoretical response to the issues of the war and to have felt a genuine emotional and imaginative involvement with its tragic aspects, even if the war experience itself, in which they had no personal part, figured only peripherally in their work. Mr. Aaron is also informative in his discussions of John W. De Forest, who participated in much of the fighting and wrote *Miss Ravenel's Conversion,* which is widely considered to be the best novel about the war to be written by a veteran, and Ambrose Bierce, who also fought and came to write with great bitterness of his experiences. Mr. Aaron is considerably less effective in his discussions of the modern writers, Faulkner and the Southern Agrarians, Allen Tate, Donald Davidson, and Robert Penn Warren, for whom the war and its aftermath, along with the myth of the chivalric ante-bellum South, constituted a heritage of romantic legendry and social corruption that became in their best work the source of a symbolism of great tragic as well as comic-ironic significance. He does not really engage the Agrarian writers at all, and his treatment of Faulkner incorporates the worst features of his synoptic approach.

Although the list of writers whom Mr. Aaron at least touches on seems, if anything, overly long, it still contains curious gaps for which he offers no explanation. One wonders, for example, why he is willing to depart from his thesis to the extent of including discussion of such a gifted diarist of the war period as Mary Boykin Chesnut, while making no mention of such other diarists as Kate Stone, Sarah Morgan, or Charlotte Forten, whose *Journal* contains an invaluable account of a mulatto girl's experiences as a teacher of Southern blacks during the war, and whose association in 1862 and 1863 with the Boston Abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson, then a colonel in the Union army, during the campaign in South Carolina is surely one of the most unusual relationships between black and white in the history of the war. Mr. Aaron does not discuss Higginson himself beyond a few brief references. Yet Higginson's *Army Life in a Black Regiment* is an important document of wartime race relations. There is also no mention of Kate Chopin, and Rebecca Harding Davis is only quoted. Yet both women were writers of some significance, and it can be argued that in her *Life in the Iron Mills* Mrs. Davis made a pioneering contribution to the development of the realistic novel in America, at the same time that she wrote considerable fiction directly concerned with the war. One might also ask why, if he chose to include Mrs. Chesnut, Mr. Aaron fails to consider such eminent military memoirists as Generals Grant and Sherman. Because Wilson had already done so?

BUT the question that most urgently needs to be raised about *The Unwritten War* is why, if he is so preoccupied with the failure of the war writers to produce an epic literature, Mr. Aaron did not concentrate his attention on the possible causes of that failure or at least offer us some educated speculations about them. As it now stands, he devotes more than three hundred pages to a discussion of how these writers mostly did not react literarily, or reacted with less than complete effectiveness, to the war experience. It would seem he might have been well advised to condense these materials into an essay of forty or fifty pages and devote the bulk of the book to a close psycho-historical examination of the factors behind this singular phenomenon. Instead, he confines the expression of his vague and fragmentary thoughts on the subject to a few pages in his introduction and conclusion. The definitive study of this subject would need to take into account and explore at considerable length areas of speculation which Mr. Aaron passes over much too quickly.

It might, for example, be argued that by the time the war ended, the causes for which it had been fought as well as the realities of the actual fighting had become so thoroughly fictionalized in the public mind of both North and South that any effort to fictionalize them formally may well have seemed either redundant or sacrilegious. There is undoubtedly much truth in Thomas Beer's observation that "the 'real' war was unwritten because of that spiritual censorship which strictly forbids the telling of truth about any American record until the material of such an essay is scattered and gone." Surely, no other major war in history was fought over issues so beclouded in myth and romantic sentiment or so distorted by the pretensions of high-minded self-delusion and metaphysical claptrap. Slavery may have been the official rabble-rousing moral issue of the war. But the motives that drove the armies of both sides to such preposterous lengths of slaughter and generalized mayhem were those of sectional chauvinism and economic self-interest, which, since they were too crass to be openly acknowledged, had to be transcendentalized into grandiose quasi-religious abstractions. Wilson described the process as one in which the South pitted "a recipro-

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cal vision . . . with equal fanaticism against the North's Armageddonlike vision, derived from its traditional theology, of the holy crusade which was to liberate the slaves and to punish their unrighteous masters. If the Northerners were acting the Will of God, the Southerners were rescuing a hallowed ideal of gallantry, aristocratic freedom, fine manners, and luxurious living from the materialism and vulgarity of the mercantile Northern society."

Mr. Aaron writes perceptively about the tendency of both North and South to regard their war in Miltonic terms, as a sequel to the English civil wars, and to identify themselves, respectively, with the Puritan Roundheads and the royalist Cavaliers. "Just as the Puritans sapped the kingly prerogative and humbled the arrogant Cavaliers, so their descendants smashed the legatees of royalism in the Southern States"—thereby creating, one might add, that mighty legend of heroic defeat and the destruction of the last American stronghold of civilized men, on which the South to the present day has nourished its pious self-image and, in the process, severely retarded its development toward genuine civilization. In *Life on the Mississippi,* Mark Twain only half facetiously attributed the oppressive influence of this legend to the novels of Sir Walter Scott, who set "the [Southern] world in love with dreams and phantoms; with decayed and swinish forms of religion; with decayed and degraded systems of government; with the sillinesses and emptinesses, sham grandeurs, sham gauds, and sham chivalries of a brainless and worthless long-vanished society." It even seemed to Twain that "Sir Walter had so large a hand in making Southern character, as it existed before the war, that he is in great measure responsible for the war," and Twain was also convinced that one of the chief reasons why Southern literature remained moribund while Northern literature flourished after the war was that the latter had thrown off "that old inflated style" derived from Scott, while the former still clung to it.

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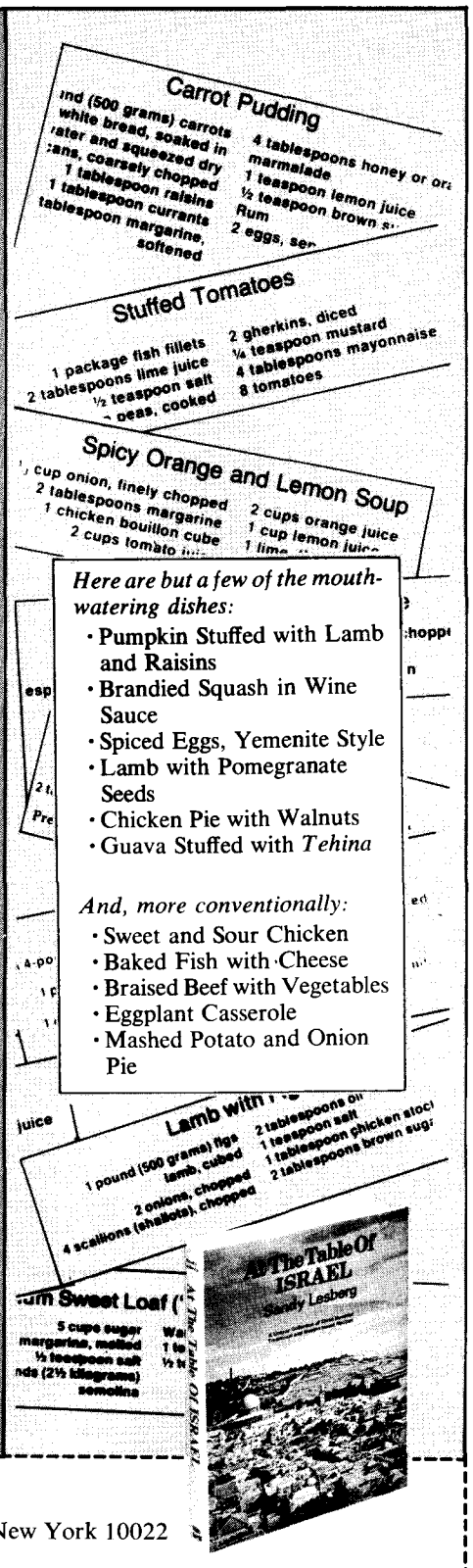

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people forming a conception of themselves on their reading of romantic novels, and then going off to die for that conception, undoubtedly with appropriate quotations of bad prose resounding in their heads. Nothing would seem more suitable to the production of the kind of literature we have become accustomed to see produced by wars, the kind that represents the sabotage of pieties and hypocrisies, the follies of vain heroism, and that dramatizes the disparity between the professed moral objectives and the realities of war experience. Yet the writers of the Civil War wrote virtually no literature of this kind, and they did not partly because so many of them were themselves deceived by platitudes and partly because the realistic tradition in American fiction was not yet sufficiently developed to provide them with the technical means or the imaginative stimulus. Until well after the war, the conventional high style of American prose in both the North and the South had, as Twain suggested, a heavy verbosity and rhetorical floridness that made it the perfect medium of patriotic oratory and obfuscation. It was the eloquent language of the establishment con job, a sort of 19th-century Watergatese, and while it was beautifully suited to the telling of lies, one can hardly imagine how a serious writer could have used it to tell the truth. Nevertheless, there were certain writers of the period—most notably Twain himself, Howells, Bierce, and De Forest—who were writing a simple and straightforward realistic prose. Yet even De Forest, who seems to have been encouraged in his attempts at realism by the example of Stendhal, confessed that he could not bring himself to tell "the whole truth about war and battle—lest the world should infer that I was naturally a coward, and so could not know the feelings of a brave man." It was very probably this kind of reticence deriving from both personal pride and the lack of a developed anti-heroic literary tradition that prevented the appearance of a truly effective and honest war literature.

But there were other deterrents as well. For example, Mr. Aaron speaks with tantalizing brevity of the fact that "the men of culture who fought in the war considered it unsoldierly to write" and that "the truths about the war . . . were hardly printable subjects to the predominantly feminine reading public" of the time. But he does not take adequately into account the extremely important point that the war writers lacked what De Forest described as an overview of American society, a vision that would encompass the "variety" of our regional life and transcend the "antagonism" between the different sections. American writers both before the war and for many years afterward were provincial writers, inhibited by local interests and prejudices, and they were, moreover, writers who, according to Mr. Aaron, "simply did not know the land and people they spoke to and spoke for." Under such circumstances neither the Great American Novel nor the great American war epic could be expected to be written, and it is precisely to an exhaustive analysis and interpretation of such circumstances that Mr. Aaron's study should have been devoted.

Not until Faulkner did America produce a creative imagination complex and ironical enough to demythologize the South and the Civil War, and with the one exception of Stephen Crane in *The Red Badge of Courage,* it was not until World War I that our writers became capable of producing a war literature of genuine distinction. Regrettably, the story of our greatest war remains unwritten, and in spite of the efforts of Wilson and Mr. Aaron, so too does the definitive study of the reasons why.

The Work of Art

THE AGE OF THE AVANT-GARDE. By HILTON KRAMER. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 565 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by LEON WIESELTIER

THE explosion of artistic talent in this country in the 1940's and 50's, with the accompanying thrill of America's suddenly finding itself at the center of the art world, raised an especially acute question as to the proper role in all this of the art critic. The two major critical responses to the new American art have been those of Harold Rosenberg and Clement Greenberg, and they are diametrically opposed in their approach.

Harold Rosenberg's fervent partisanship of the "action painters"—he coined the term—is well known. For Rosenberg, the work of these painters is a kind of touchstone of the cultural *Zeitgeist,* radical acts of artistic will which succeed in collapsing aesthetic form and distance upon the personality of the artist. The artist's presence completely fills and monumentally simplifies the formerly complicated space within which painting has traditionally subsisted. And the consequences of this for criticism are subversive. ". . . Anything is relevant to the new painting. Anything that has to do with action. . . . Anything but criticism. The critic who goes on judging in terms of schools, styles, form—as if the painter were still concerned with producing a certain kind of object (the work of art), instead of living on the canvas—is bound to seem a stranger." The job of the critic is to become the voice of the artist, a new kind of agent, making available in words the private and mysterious traumas that are art's existential substance.

Clement Greenberg's criticism rests precisely on the opposite premise—that, whatever the artist's motivations, the "certain kind of object" he produces is always susceptible of formal and stylistic analysis. For Greenberg, modern art is an epic of progressive sophistication in pictorial form. Whatever the social or psychological meanings of a work, its properly artistic meaning is to be found exclusively within its own boundaries. *Art and Culture,* the book Greenberg is best known for, is a series of glosses upon this critical axiom; the thrust of his criticism—"what counts first and last in art is quality; all other things are secondary"—is nowhere more pronounced than in his rigorously formal discussions of "American-Type Painting," the very artists who, for Rosenberg, had rendered this kind of criticism obsolete.

LEON WIESELTIER *will be studying philosophy and art history at Oxford next year as a Kellett Fellow.*

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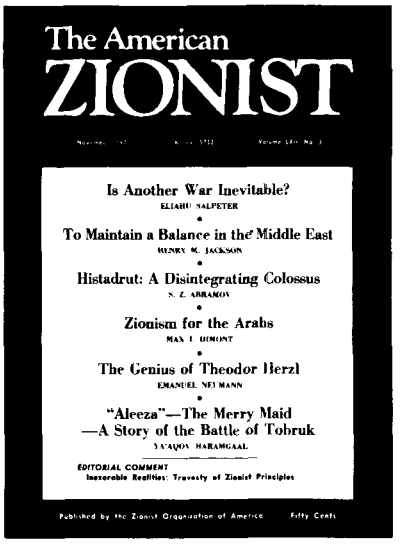

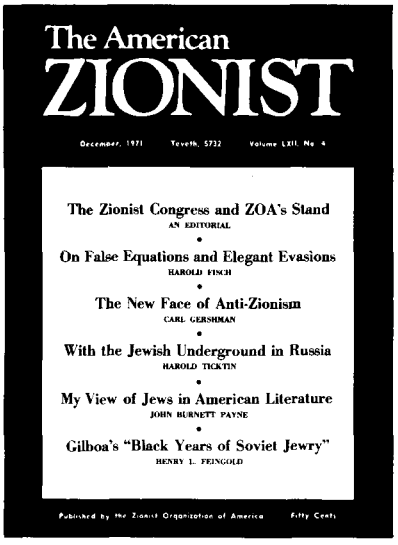

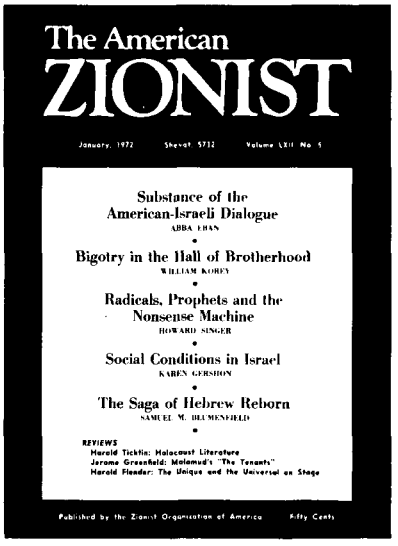

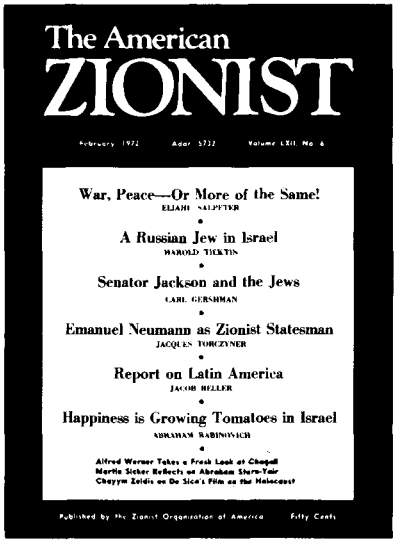
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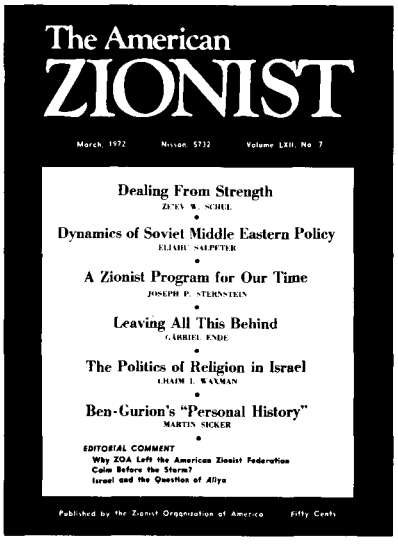

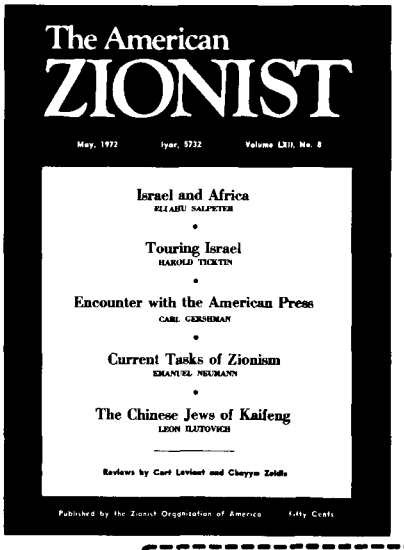

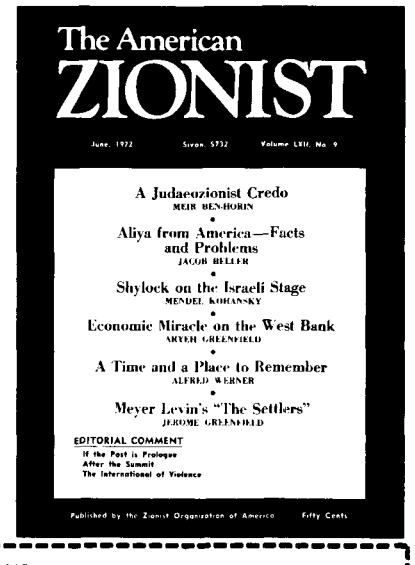

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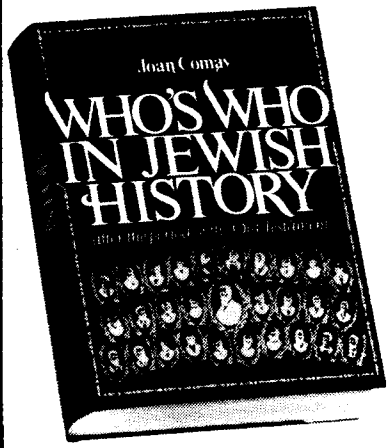

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Rosenberg's criticism, then, is of the studio, Greenberg's of the museum. For Rosenberg criticism takes its cue from the artist, and is essentially empathetic; for Greenberg, it takes its cue from the work itself and forever retains its critical distance.

WITH *The Age of the Avant-Garde*, Hilton Kramer impressively establishes his succession to Greenberg, and establishes himself also as perhaps the most intelligent critic writing in America today. *The Age of the Avant-Garde* is a collection of reviews and essays written between 1956 and 1972. It is a rich and comprehensive anthology, ranging from Turner and Impressionism to the very latest "return" to realism. Kramer, who is art critic of the New York *Times*, warns at the outset that most of the pieces were produced hastily, under the pressure of newspaper deadlines, but his book is, in fact, a kind of *ad hoc* history of modern art, successful almost because it does not aspire to be systematic. Kramer's discussions of modern sculpture deserve special notice, and some of his longer essays—particularly those on Corinth, Matisse, and David Smith—are critical reappraisals of the first order.

The kind of criticism Kramer writes originates, like that of Greenberg, in meticulous observation; indeed, Kramer's argument with some of his colleagues is based precisely upon the blatant disparity he sees between the confident theoretical pronouncements of sophisticated critics and the actual works of art they appeal to for evidence. The excited critic, imposing on a work claims which it cannot sustain, succeeds only in substituting an exaggerated aesthetic theory for the work itself; for Kramer, criticism must provide an approach, not an obstacle, to the work, and as a result of adhering to this principle his own criticism is at once more flexible and more exigent than that of his more ideologically inclined colleagues. But if the critic is not a theoretician, neither is he merely a reporter; the refreshing perceptual candor of Kramer's criticism is worlds removed from naiveté. Impressively erudite, Kramer is instructive without being academic, literate without being pretentious. The "workaday mode of criticism" which he professes is meant to investigate the artist's "objective accomplishment and its aesthetic commerce with historical precedent." In the practice of this mode Kramer successfully transcends the pigeonholing nature of much critical discourse to arrive at a subtle understanding of the manifold influences on modern art.

But if Kramer resembles Greenberg in his insistence on disinterested analysis and interpretation, he does not share Greenberg's historicist theory of art. In his excellent essay on Greenberg, he writes that Greenberg's "habit of pronouncing all judgments as if they were objective readings of history" is ultimately "a refusal to allow one's personal experience of art to affect one's final judgment of it until that experience can be completely assimilated to historical principles." Kramer champions the free and private space of the artist against any attempts to reduce it to aesthetic or historical teleologies; this for him is an article of faith, apparent in the many portraits he sketches in this book.

This is not to say that Kramer's work is itself lacking in historical consciousness. On the contrary, his individual assessments are set against the background of a particular perspective on the historical career of the modernist movement. That perspective is best seen in the title essay of his book (which originally appeared in COMMENTARY, October 1972). This essay is not only a thoughtful and provocative statement of a revisionist view of avant-garde art, but offers a comprehensive theory of modern culture as well. Kramer contends that the monolithic character of the modernist movement is a myth, albeit one that was required for the movement's heroic self-image. Beginning with an argument first advanced by Meyer Schapiro in 1936 (in an essay on "The Social Bases of Art") and taking it a step further, he maintains that modernism was marked from the beginning by a deep ambivalence which was in turn rooted in the ambivalence of modern bourgeois society. "The bourgeois ethos may be said to have both a 'progressive' and 'reactionary' side"—on the one hand the

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notorious philistinism of the middle classes which the avant-garde consistently denounced, on the other hand the commitment to liberalism and to freedom of expression which lay at the heart of bourgeois society and to which the avant-garde owed its very existence.

A closer look at the art which developed within this simultaneously suffocating and fecund atmosphere reveals, not surprisingly, that it was marked by similar divisions. Within the ranks of the avant-garde were to be found both the votaries of dissension and revolt, such as the Dadaists and the Surrealists, and the votaries of harmony and tradition, such as Matisse and Picasso.

For the revolutionaries, art was a medium of decisive historical consequence, and the artist a figure of primary social and political importance. Focusing upon the already debilitating tensions of modern society so as further to exacerbate them, these artists dedicated their energies to a ruthless assault upon all that was venerable, the practice of art itself not exempted. Yet the radical ideological commitments of the Futurists, for example, ended by playing a role in the coming to power of a political system—fascism—which made the practice of art unthinkable. "What the Futurists failed to perceive," Kramer comments, "was the contingent and suicidal nature of their own impulse."

The revolutionary activities for which modern artists are notorious, however, were confined for the most part to the political sphere, and remain a sub-plot in the history of modern art. "The principal avant-garde action of the period—the main plot, if you will—was being prepared elsewhere with no public attention to speak of, hence without scandal or violence, in the studios of Matisse and Picasso. . . ." The ironic fate of the revolutionaries was that, whenever they turned their energies to the making of serious art, they were forced to confront the patient, apolitical achievements of their more "traditional" contemporaries; the art produced by the Futurists is for Kramer a kind of footnote to the monumental achievements of the Cubists.

For those in the "main plot," tradition lay at the very center of artistic consciousness, it was the condition of artistic innovation. But this was tradition in the sense which T.S. Eliot intended in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," for Kramer the classic statement of the modern conception of the artist as someone who harnesses the energies of the past even as he goes about undermining its authority. According to Kramer the essence of modernism lay in the attempt to change the old relation of culture to power by freeing culture of its ornamental status and making the artist answerable solely to his own convictions and heritage.

It was the relativistic character of this view of tradition which was most decisive for the development of our contemporary cultural situation. The substitution of "individual talent" for the authority of the past had the unwitting and anarchic effect of undermining art's seriousness. Thus Kramer writes that "the 'tradition' of the avant-

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garde turned out to be something not really transmissible *as* tradition after all. . . . Picasso's Cubism may retain its blood ties to Cézanne, whereas a 'ready-made' by Duchamp, although it takes its cue from Cubist construction, deliberately orphans itself from the tradition in which it has its genesis." And so, no longer bound to even the most rudimentary principles of aesthetic decision, the artist's choices become arbitrary.

Thus was the avant-garde hoist by its own petard. A look at the contemporary art world makes abundantly clear that the vaunted animosity between the *peintre maudit* and his society has been replaced by a very profitable accommodation—in Greenberg's phrase, by "an umbilical cord of gold"—among the artist, his dealers, and his public. And in the meantime, art is still being enlisted in all sorts of causes. In a polemical essay written in 1970, Kramer notes with dismay the "politicization of the art scene," the "noisy chorus of radical affirmation" sung by "political amateurs" whose realm of competence is limited to aesthetic innovation.

For Kramer all this is bad history repeating itself. Although politics can turn the avant-garde into kitsch, the only service the avant-garde can offer in the political realm is to provide totalitarianism with a culture. The mere fact that history is recurring so quickly is a demonstration of the extent to which the avant-garde has burnt itself out. Every joke has been made, every tradition negated, every crime perpetrated, every perpetration rewarded. Is it not time, then, for art to begin taking itself seriously again? This, in the end, is the main thrust, and the great value, of Kramer's work: his criticism is a challenge to contemporary art to pull itself together, to recover its self-respect. Having lived through the nihilistic consequences of its own recklessness, modern art is now in a position to attempt a new beginning—one in which innovation and lack of direction will not be mistaken for richness of aesthetic experience, and in which the work of art can once again carry its own weight in the world.

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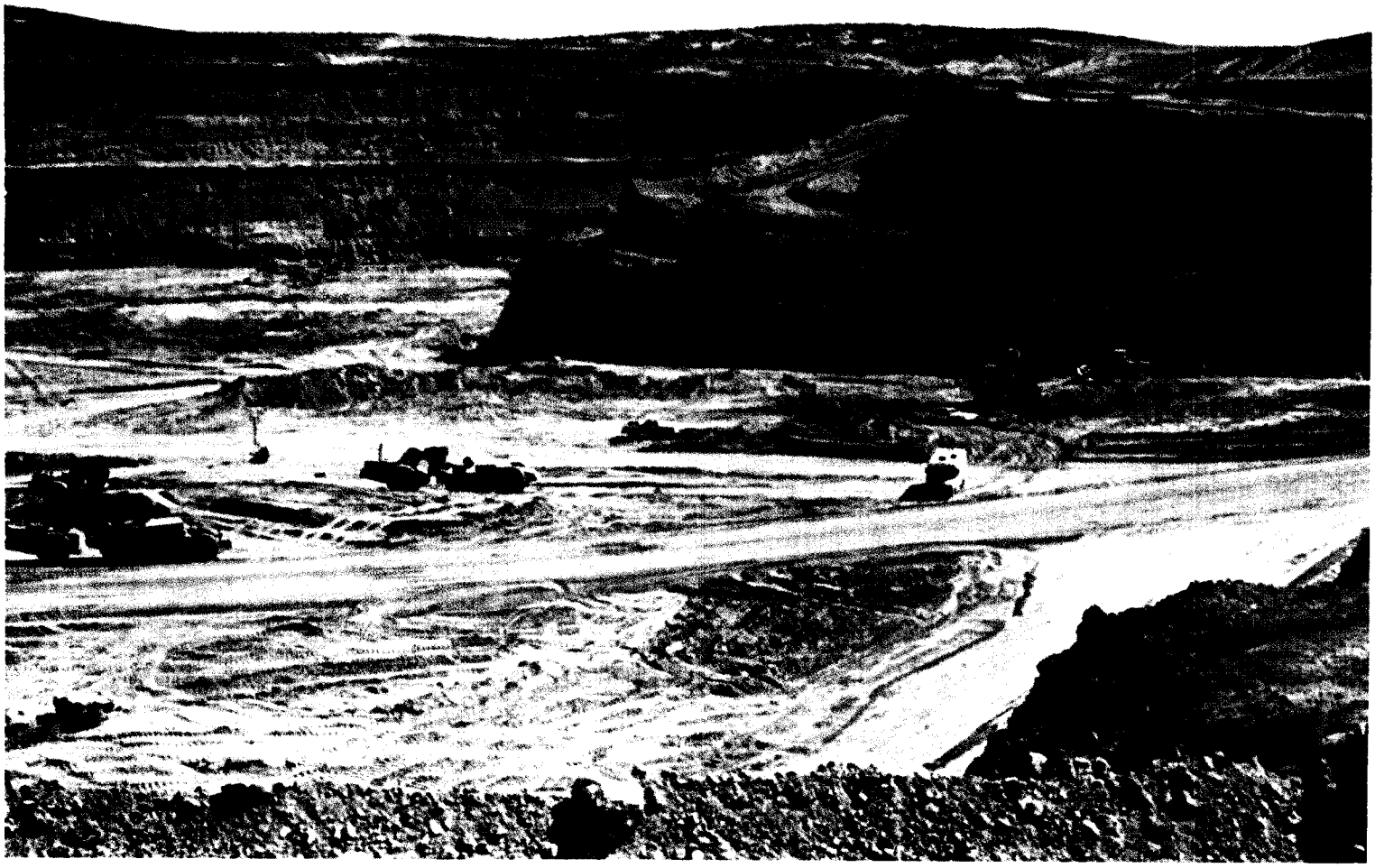

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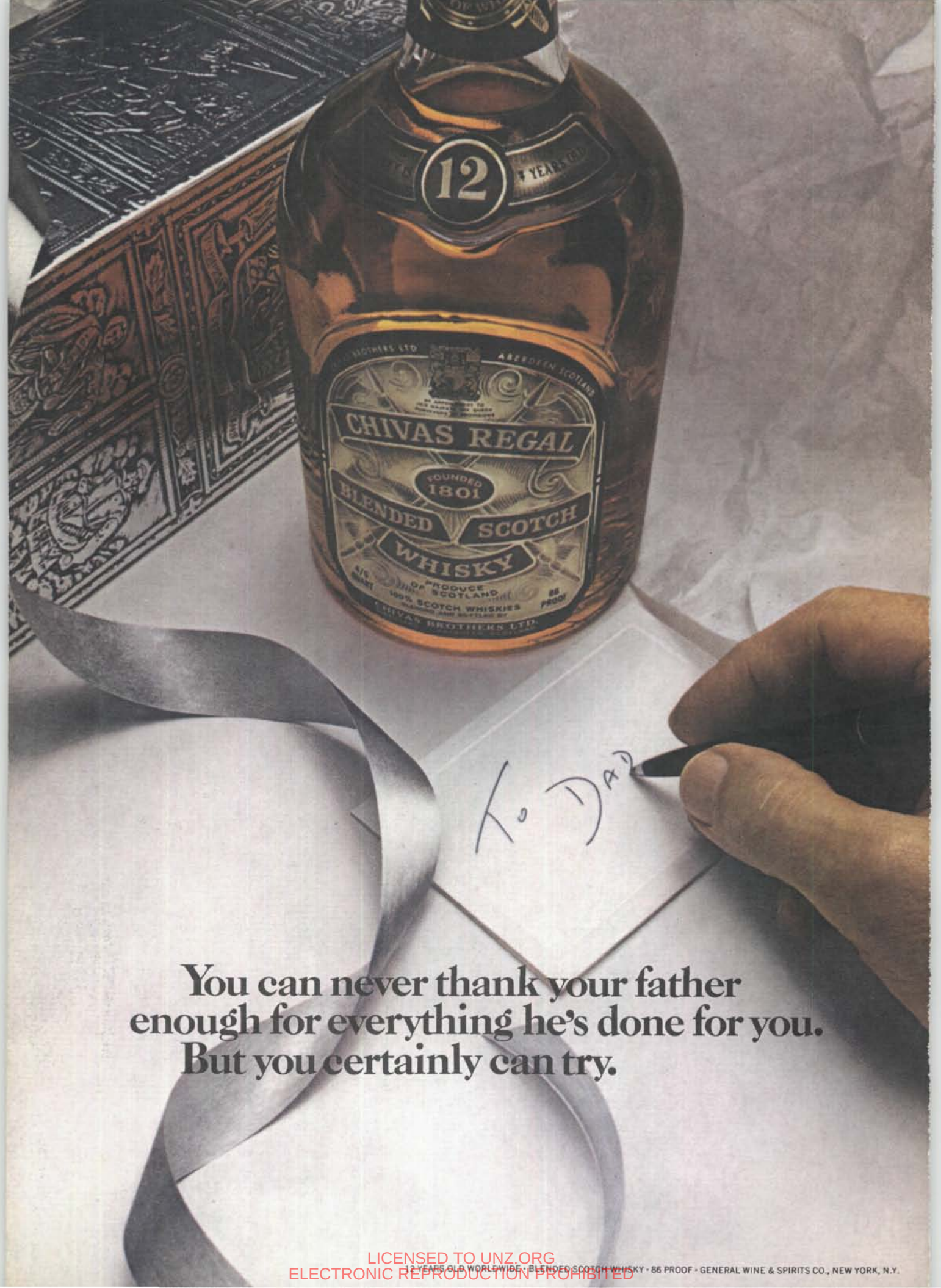

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